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The Martyrdom

OF

JESUS

OF

NAZARETH.

A HISTORIC-CRITICAL TREATISE ON THE LAST CHAPTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

BY DR. ISAAC M. WISE.

רק אמת בשם יהוה

"Only truth in the name of Jehovah."—2 Chronicles, xvii. 15.

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PREFACE.

PREFACES are tedious, and I will be brief. I would not write, if it was not for the term standpoint, about which something must be said, to facilitate a correct understanding of this treatise.

I have dedicated this volume to the great Parisian jurist and democratic patriot, Isaac Adolph Cremieux, not merely because I hold that illustrious gentleman in the highest esteem, both as a scholar and a philanthropist; but also because in him the Jew of the nineteenth century is personified. It is the standpoint of universal benevolence, of broad and liberal principles, of pure and exalted humanitarianism based upon profound and sublime principles of ethical religion. I do not mean to say that all Jews have arrived at this lofty standpoint; I merely maintain, those who have kept pace with the progressive elements of the century have reached that altitude of thought and principle.

This Isaac Adolph Cremieux was born in France in the beginning of this century. Like the author of this treatise, when a poor boy, a little barefooter, he was mortified and

scorned by petulent fellows, because he was the son of Jewish parents. But in his upward march to glory, Cremieux left all of them in the background, stood twice at the head of the French Republic as the high-priest of justice, and is this day a prominent member of the National Assembly, always true to the democratic and humanitarian principles, without showing in his long and eventful career of usefulness any other than the loftiest and purest standpoint of the man and the patriot.

This is the point the author wishes to define. On numerous occasions he has been told that people are anxious to read what he writes on subjects in the New Testament, because they wish to learn what is said about them from the Jewish standpoint. This is a mistake. The author who now speaks to you is a Jew of the nineteenth century, whose motto is, "The world is my country and love is my religion;" whose people are all of God's children; and whose standpoint in philosophy, science, and criticism is as purely objective and as free of every prejudice or bias as long years of reading, research, and traveling make a human being. He wears no sectarian shackels, stands under no local bias, and obeys no mandates of any particular school. Whatever he says or has said on subjects contained in the New Testament, in order to be understood correctly, must be examined from the only standpoint of reason.

The author takes the liberty to add that he claims originalty for the ideas presented in this treatise. He borrows from none. All passages from the ancient rabbinical literature, quoted in this treatise, have been selected and translated from the originals by him, and for this volume, without aid or support of any body. While Strauss, Renan, Wislicenus, and the English writers on kindred subjects obtained their knowledge of ancient rabbinical literature

from some translated abstracts, compiled under various prejudicial circumstances, and in many cases teeming with errors, the author has had full access to the originals, and has made the best use of this privilege as far as his erudition reaches. This will explain the opinions advanced by the author contrary to some of Strauss, Renan, and the others, whose information on that age and its spirit was deficient and often erroneous.

In conclusion, he begs permission to say that his sole object in writing is truth. He aims at no literary reputation, no income, no position in society; he has but this one ambition, viz., to tell the truth to the best of his knowledge. If he fails in this, in any particular point, it is on account of his mental deficiencies, which God may forgive him; the critic never will.

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE is but one absolute truth, and this is God's,* therefore truth is the only redeemer of man. Whoever can not find peace and happiness in the divine realm of truth, will in vain seek them in illusion and error. There is religion in truth, and superstition in error. In religion, there is righteousness, charity, freedom, peace, happiness, and enthusiasm; fanaticism, hatred, persecution, oppression, and an enslaved mind are the offspring of superstition. These are the criteria by which to distinguish religion from superstition. Those who do not love truth must not read this treatise. It can do them no good. The author claims to be a servant of truth.

Why publish it? is the question to which the reader is entitled, and which the author has repeatedly asked himself. If God deigns to reveal certain truth or truths to an humble individual, why must he publish them, if he runs the risk of disturbing the religious convictions of his fellow-men? But truth is not ours, it is God's. Therefore, it is indomitable and irresistible. No man and no body of men, neither the human family with all its wisdom, ingenuity, and power, nor Nature itself, with all the violence of her forces, can control or change truth. Three times three are nine, independent of all that is, was, or will be. By the cogitation of truth, man enters the council of the Most High, and by the comprehension thereof he is not merely made an ordained disciple; he is compelled to be its herald. Truth is sovereign, and its disciples must obey. As in the cases of Moses, Jonah, and Jeremiah† excuses are useless, and resistance is offered in vain. By this peculiarity of truth and this trait of the human character, truth was promulgated, and, in numerous cases, to the detriment and painful injury of its heralds. Therefore, all the answer the author can make to the reader's question is contained in the following words of Jeremiah: "And, I thought, I will not

*Rabbi Bun says (Talmud Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin, 1. i.), "What is truth? That He is the God of life, and the King of the world." God alone is absolute truth.

† Exodus iv.; Jonah i. 3; Jeremiah xxi. 9.

make mention of him (God), and I will not speak any more. But it became in my heart as a burning fire inclosed within my bones, and I was weary with enduring, and I could not overcome it." Therefore, in the name of God, truth!

The author believes to have overcome the prejudices which education and association impose, and to have reached a purely objective standpoint with the ability of impersonal judgment. He has undertaken this piece of work, as he verily believes, without any prejudice or personal opinion to be imposed on the literary sources before him. He claims to have diligently studied the Christian Scriptures and their cotemporary literature. He has written a number of essays and treatises on various chapters of the New Testament, published in THE ISRAELITE in the years 1858, 1859, and 1863. He has translated that portion of Gustav Adolf Wislecenu's book, *Die Bibel fuer denkende Leser betrachtet*, which relates to the four Gospels, and published it in THE ISRAELITE, in the year 1865. In the year 1867, he published in the same journal a treatise on the Acts of the Apostles, which was republished by Bloch & Co. (Cincinnati, 1868), and called "The Origin of Christianity, and a commentary to the Acts of the Apostles." In the year 1869, he published in the same journal an essay, in ten chapters, on the precepts of Jesus, called "Jesus Himself." Besides he published in this and other journals, a number of critical expositions on Bible passages, which have a special bearing on Christianity, such as Genesis, xlix. 10; Deuter., xviii. 20; 2 Saml., vii.; Isaiah, vii. 14; ix. 5; xi. 1; liii.; Psalms ii. and cx., and similar passages. So prepared, he wrote a course of three lectures on Jesus, the Apostles, and Paul (published last year), and delivered them in the largest cities of the Union, to intelligent and appreciative audiences, and under the most favorable criticism of the public press. Therefore the author considers himself sufficiently acquainted with the sources to understand them correctly.

The author claims to have written this treatise in the cause of religion. Whatever is productive of fanaticism, hatred, persecution, or oppression, is not, can not, and dare not be a doctrine, precept, or dogma of any religion. It produces effects contrary to those which religion, to be genuine and divine, must produce. It degrades and

brutalizes, and the mission of religion is to elevate and humanize. It sows discord and sustains hostility; and the great objects of religion are peace, harmony, and love. Of all the religious observances among Heathens, Jews, or Turks, none has been the cause of more hatred, persecution, outrage, and bloodshed, than the eucharist. The very word hostie or host is hostile. Christians persecuted one another like relentless foes, and thousands of Jews were slaughtered on account of the eucharist and the host. If the doctrines underlying this observance are religious, then the Hindoos' Car of Juggernaut may justly be called a religious institution. Yet, it is maintained, Jesus instituted it as one of the sacraments of the Church. If this was true, then Jesus was not a preacher of righteousness; he was the author of a superstition which bore its legitimate fruits of hatred, bloodshed, and misery. Therefore, the author's attempt in this treatise to prove that Jesus has not instituted the so-called Lord's Supper as a sacrament of the Church, is made in defense not only of religion, but also of Christianity and the character of Jesus.

Again, among all the myths and tales ever told by the Heathens, Jews, or Turks, to base religious doctrines upon them, none has ever been so egregious and pregnant of horror and slaughter as the mythical base of the doctrine of vicarious atonement. "The Jews crucified Jesus;" therefore any avaricious ruler, wicked priest, or bloodthirsty mob found an excuse and absolution for slaying thousands of innocent men, women, and children. Therefore any narrow-minded miniature reasoner, even in our days, will construct some sort of principle to justify the barbarities of past generations, showing that the assassins of the Jews were merely the innocent executioners of a foaming and raging deity, whose son had been abused. Therefore the prejudices against the Jew still draw nutriment from that old root, and the cause of religion and humanity are still defied on the strength of a myth; so tenacious is superstition. If the redemption and salvation of mankind depended upon the martyrdom of Jesus of Nazareth, and God at that particular time had decreed to save the family of man by that peculiar arrangement, then it was dire necessity that somebody must kill Jesus. So one or more people had to become criminals in order to save the human family; or, in other

words, God could not save His creatures otherwise except by the condemnation of some. We will not inquire into God's right or wisdom to make such an arrangement; we will merely say, that this precedent gives us the right to seduce one portion of the human family to crime in order to benefit the other. Every sound reasoner must reject this doctrine as immoral; yet it is maintained to be correct in religion; or, in other words, God may be immoral, man must be moral—*i. e.*, man must be better than his God. This being certainly an error, we must reject its basis, and say, the crucifixion of Jesus was not decreed by the Almighty, his martyrdom was not necessary for the salvation of mankind, and the dogma of vicarious atonement is immoral. Being immoral it is also irreligious. But aside of this reasoning it is irreligious because it was pregnant with horror, misery, and bloodshed to thousands of innocent men, women, and children, and is still the source of prejudice, discord, and hatred; and the mission of religion is peace, charity, and love. It is *eo ipso* a superstition. Whoever has the honest desire to be truly religious and truly pious, must reject everything which fanaticizes, wrongs anybody, or sows discord among brethren.

Therefore, the author's attempt in this treatise, showing that the Jews did not crucify Jesus, and that the dogma of vicarious atonement has no foundation in the Gospels, is a defense of religion in behalf of truth and humanity.

It must be said here that Frederic Schleiermacher has given up the doctrines of Christ's divinity, vicarious atonement, and the fabric of redemption based thereupon; hence that all liberal Christians have erased these doctrines from their creeds; but none, although the Academy of France has decided the question, has expressed the fact that the Romans, and not the Jews, have crucified Jesus, so that we are obliged to do it for them.

In order to be understood correctly, the reader is requested to pay attention to the following canon of criticisms:

First—None of the Gospels now before us in the Greek, was written in the first century. The Christian Scriptures of the first century were epistles and apocalypses (of which John's is a pattern). The Gospel stories and the precepts of Jesus were preserved traditionally in

the various churches, and must necessarily have undergone many changes and modifications before they were reduced to writing. Whether the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and the Gospel according to the Egyptians, mentioned by the oldest historians of the Church (Clemens, Origenes, and Eusebius), were older than those before us, can not be proved any more, as we know nothing of their authors, and next to nothing of their contents. The first account of the existence of the four Gospels is in the Muratori fragment which, according to the best authorities on the subject, was written by an Italian bishop, between the years 180 to 200 B. C.

Second—The oldest of the Gospels is that of Mark.* It is less legendary and more epic and chronological than the others. It is unitarian in doctrine, indorses nowhere the miraculous origin of Jesus, represents the Holy Ghost as a mere vision of Jesus (i. 10), has none of the antipharisean speeches which are products of the second century, and is most Jewish in principle.

The thirteenth chapter of Mark, so much is evident from the fruits of modern criticism, compiled by Dr. H. Graetz,† must have been written during the persecution of the Jews by the Emperor Hadrian, after the fall of Bethar, when Jerusalem had been changed into a Pagan city, to which facts Mark so clearly refers. The date of these persecutions is, according to Graetz, 135 to 138 A. C. According to the Talmud, Bethar fell 122 A. C. The persecutions outside of Bethar must have commenced before the fall of that city. It is certain, therefore, that the oldest Gospel was written between 120 and 138 A. C.

This leads to almost a certain knowledge of Mark himself. Dr. Mosheim informs us :‡ " When this emperor (Hadrian) had, at length, razed Jerusalem, entirely destroyed even its very foundations (which is unhistorical), and enacted laws of the severest kind against the whole body of the Jewish people, the greatest part of the Christians who lived in Palestine, to prevent their being confounded with the Jews, abandoned entirely the Mosaic rites, and chose a bishop named Mark, a foreigner by

*Dr. F. A. Mueller's Briefe ueber die Christliche Religion.

†Dr. H Graetz's Geschichte der Juden, Vol. III., second edition, eleventh chapter, and Vol. IV., Note 19.

‡Ecclesiastical History, II. Century, Chapter v.

nation, and consequently an alien from the commonwealth of Israel." This Mark and no other was the author of the second and oldest gospel extant. He was head-master of an academy in Alexandria, before he was elected bishop.

It is also discernable why Mark wrote his gospel. Up to that date the Christians read in their churches the Jewish Bible only and exclusively. One of the edicts of Hadrian prohibited under the penalty of death to possess, read, expound, or teach the Jewish Bible, especially the Pentateuch. So the Christians also had no Scriptures to read in their churches. Therefore, Mark was obliged to write a gospel to be read in the churches in lieu of the Bible. He being the Bishop of the parent congregation, his book soon became widely known among Christians, whose traditions differed essentially from those of Mark and his congregation. Therefore a number of gospels were written shortly after Mark, so that Luke could say, "For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." It is evident that many wrote gospels, and that in Syria, where Luke lived, no Gospel had been written then; it was only most surely believed, what he committed to writing. Of all those gospels, however, only that of Matthew has reached us.

Third—The chronological order of the Gospels is Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, written between 120 and 170 A. C.

Fourth—All passages, in which the four Gospels or the three synoptics literally concur, are taken from Mark.

Fifth—All passages, which are in one Gospel and not also in the other, were traditions of that church, for which that evangelist wrote.

Sixth—Every Gospel represents another set of doctrines; consequently the story is fitted to the doctrine.

Seventh—Wherever it is said "that it be fulfilled," the story is either legendary or it has been so changed as to fit to certain Scriptural passages.

With this apparatus the author has unraveled the statements of the Gospels, and has carefully compared them with others of cotemporary literature, as found in the ancient rabbinical books and elsewhere. The resultants thereof in regard to the martyrdom of Jesus, are laid down in this treatise.

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CHAPTER I.

THE SECRET CONCLAVE.

I. THE CONSPIRATORS.

MARK (xiv. 1) informs us, that two days before the feast of passover, "the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him (Jesus) by craft, and put him to death." The chief priests, under the iron rule of Pilate and his wicked master, Sejan, were the tools of the Roman soldiers who held Judea and Samaria in subjection. The chief priests were the officers of the temple, and the political agents. Like the high-priest, they were appointed to and removed from office by the Roman governor of the country, either directly or indirectly. They purchased their commissions for high prices, and, like almost all Roman appointees, used them for mercenary purposes. They were considered wicked men by the ancient writers,* and must have stood very low in the estimation of the people, over whom they tyrannized. The patriots must have looked upon them as the hirelings of the foreign despot whose rule was abhorred. Although there was, here and there, a good, pious, and patriotic man among them, he was an exception. As a general thing, and under the rule of Pilate, especially, they were the corrupt tools of a military despotism which Rome imposed upon enslaved Palestine.†

Josephus gives us to understand (Antiqu., xx., ix. 1) that most of the high priests of that period were Zadducees, as one must naturally expect. The Pharisees were the democrats, who were most bitterly opposed to the Roman despotism, as they had been to Herod and Archelaus, and had asked of Pompey already the restoration of the democratic theocracy in Palestine. Ancient Hebrew

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* Siphri, Phineas beginning; Yerushalmi, Yoma, i. 1, and elsewhere. See also the story of Martha, the wife of Joshua ben Gamala, who purchased the high-priesthood for her husband, of Agrippa II., for a pot full of gold.

† See I. Salvador's History of the Roman Dominion in Judea (French), Vol. 1, Epoch iii., Chapter iii., and the corresponding chapters in Jost's, Graetz's, and Raphall's History of the Jews.

writers corroborate this statement. They call one faction of the Zadducees Boethites, and Boethus was the family name of the priestly house, then in power. In Yerushalmi (Yoma, i. 5) the Zadducees are plainly called Boethites. Some of those Boethite high-priests were unable to read the Hebrew Bible (Mishna, Yoma, i. 6); hence, they certainly were ignorant in Jewish lore and law. Therefore it was necessary for them to have in their train learned counselors, scribes of the Pharisees or Zadducees, to advise them, and to guard them against blunders in law and custom. These learned counselors are the Pharisees and Scribes which, throughout the Gospels, appear in the train of the chief priests. They were the hirelings of the chief priests, and with them the tools of Rome. Some of these chief priests and these scribes—we know now who they were—Mark informs us, sought how they might take him (Jesus) by craft, and put him to death. They were no representative men in Israel; they represented Rome, or rather Pontius Pilate, who represented Sejan, the wicked minister of Tiberius, one of Rome's bloodthirsty Cæsars. They did not represent the zealots; for those zealots were the most violent and most valiant democrats of that age, and the most implacable enemies of Rome; while those priests and scribes were Rome's hirelings. They did not represent the will of the pilgrims and citizens assembled in Jerusalem, as is evident from the testimony of the evangelists, to be reviewed hereafter. They represented themselves and their Roman masters only and exclusively. A dozen or two of leading politicians among the priests, it appears, conspired against the life of Jesus. Their motives will be unraveled in this chapter.

If Mark's statement is reliable, then we have the main key to the situation. Let us investigate. Matthew (xxvi. 3, 4) copies the words of Mark and enlarges on them. His additions must be especially investigated. He says:

"Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtility, and kill him."

There are in this statement two additions: (1) "The elders of the people;" and (2) That the meeting was in the palace of the high-priest. We have the united tes-

timony of the three other evangelists against these additions of Matthew. Mark did not know them; Luke and John, who must have seen them, must have discredited them, for none of them mentions either the elders of the people or the palace of the high-priest. It must not be maintained that Luke and John omitted these two points, because Matthew had already written them. Neither of them intended to supplement either of their predecessors. Each proposed to himself to write the whole story. There is not one proof in the Gospels that any of them intended to supplement another book, Luke says it clearly enough in his introductory verses, that he wrote the Gospel stories completely, without reference to any other writer, "as they delivered them unto us;" and yet he omits those two points of Matthew. It could only be because they were not delivered unto him, and he did not accredit them on the authority of Matthew. John did the same thing precisely. Therefore, we have three testimonies for Mark's statement, and just as many against Matthew's additions. There is a discrepancy in this verse. For the Latin, Matthew omits "scribes;" making it evident that he changed arbitrarily Mark's "scribes" into "elders." Luke changes it back into Mark's scribes, and John makes of it the more definite Pharisees, as scribes may be either Pharisees or Zadducees.

Another point must be taken into consideration in this connection. The conspiracy of those enemies of Jesus must have been strictly secret; because the very resolve of taking him by subtility and killing him, no less than the execution thereof, was calculated to make that same uproar among the people, which those conspirators meant to frustrate. Besides, if not strictly secret, it would have been useless entirely, as the friends of Jesus, discovering it, could have crossed the scheme. If it was indeed strictly secret, how could the evangelists obtain an account thereof? and how could Matthew and John have known the very particulars of the conspiracy, so that the former reports where it was, and the latter adds what the high-priest suggested on that occasion? If any one of the conspirators had afterward betrayed the transaction, one at least of the evangelists must have named the traitor to substantiate the statement and to clear up the mystery which renders it spurious. Therefore, we are forced to

the hypothesis that the statement was made retrospectively. After the whole fact of the martrydom of Jesus was before his disciples, and from the tenor of the persons engaged in it, it was supposed the plot originated in the conspiracy of some priests and scribes. So Mark and Luke viewed the situation. Therefore Mark leaves the high-priest out of the drama to the very last scene (xiv. 60), and Luke exonerates him altogether, and mentions his name no more in connection with Jesus. Matthew (xxvi. 59) and John (xviii. 19), who place the high-priest at the head of the proceedings had against Jesus, must naturally have supposed, retrospectively, of course, that Caiaphas, the high-priest, was the principal figure also in the primary conspiracy. Therefore Matthew states, it was in the high-priest's palace, and John adds the very words of that dignitary on that occasion. All this suggests that in the early Church there were two different traditions on the whole tenor of the martrydom of Jesus: one in Judea, chronicled by Mark; and another outside thereof, chronicled by Matthew. Luke and John made attempts to harmonize both, as we shall have frequent occasions to notice. The fact could have been but one; hence the two different traditions point to two different retrospective views of the same fact.

II. THE TIME.

Both Mark and Matthew narrate in the same words that the conspirators said, "not on the feast-day," their designs against Jesus should be carried into effect, "lest there be an uproar of (among) the people." This statement is somewhat indefinite. It leaves it uncertain whether the design was to be carried out before or after the feast; and whether the uproar of the people was apprehended by the capture and execution of Jesus, or by the contrary thereof, viz., to let him continue his work to the feast-day. Before we can clear up this obscurity, we must correct an error.

Many commentators, so also Adam Clarke, suppose the words, "Not on the feast-day," were put in by Mark and repeated by Matthew; because it was usual for the Jews to punish criminals at the public festivals. In this case, however, the conspirators wanted to make an exception, because they apprehended an uproar of the people. This is a mistake. It was law in Israel, in all cases of capital

punishment except one, that the execution followed the rendition of the sentence directly on the same, or the very next day, so that it was a standing formula, אין מענין את הדין which signifies both: "Justice must not be delayed;" and, also, "Justice must not be made cruel." The time between the sentence and its execution was considered the most tormenting to the criminal, and was, therefore, made as short as possible.*

It was prohibited not only to execute a criminal on Sabbath, or a feast-day, but also to open his trial on Friday, or the eve of a holy day; because, if found guilty, he could not be executed the next day.† Only in one case, the *Zaken Mamrai*, the law ordains his execution to take place in Jerusalem, and so near one of the high feasts, not on the feast, that all the pilgrims might hear and see; because, in his case, the Bible ordains (Deuter. xvii. 13), public proceedings to be made known to *all the people*.‡

A *Zaken Mamrai*, literally "the rebellious senator," is an ordained judge and teacher, eligible into the Sanhedrin, and entitled to plead before that body, who willfully decides cases in law contrary to the laws made by the Sanhedrin. After he has been found guilty thereof the first time, before the Sanhedrin, he is reprimanded and retained in his office. If he decides again contrary to the law of the land, with rebellious intentions, he is tried and, if found guilty, sent to the Sanhedrin, in Jerusalem, kept there to the next holy day, and then put to death publicly.

Jesus was no *Zaken Mamrai*. In the first place, he was no ordained judge and teacher, in the sense of the law; and in the second place, he held no office as public judge and teacher. But if both had been the case, he could not have been condemned to death as such at the first trial. Aside of all these considerations, it was not so easy to find one guilty as *Zaken Mamrai*; for also the second time, he had to be tried first in the court of his own district—and Jesus was a Galilean—and then, if found guilty, he was sent to the Sanhedrin, in Jerusalem, where he had the right of appeal. The last point to be considered is this:

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* See Maimonides, Mishnah Thorah, Hilchoth Sanhedrin, xii. 4, and xiii. 1.

† Ibid. xi. 2, and sources quoted *in loco cit.*

‡ Ibid. Hilchoth Mamrim, iii. 8.

None but the high Sanhedrin could decree the execution of the *Zaken Mamrai;* and there was none in Jerusalem from 30 to 40 A. C. But we discuss this point hereafter. It is certain that Jesus could not have been tried and condemned as a *Zaken Mamrai;* no other criminal was executed on any feast in Jerusalem; hence the words of the evangelists, "not on the feast-day," refer to no Jewish law or custom.

There are other commentators, and among them also David Frederic Strauss, who understand the evangelical statement so: The conspirators resolved to dispose of Jesus in any manner, but not on the feast-day; because they feared an uproar among the numerous pilgrims in Jerusalem, among whom Jesus was very popular, some of them believing he was a prophet. Therefore they resolved to wait till after the feast, and then execute their evil designs. We must presuppose, in order to justify this view, that the pilgrims were friendlier disposed toward Jesus than the citizens of Jerusalem, which is not supported by any statement of the evangelists, or any other evidence. On the contrary, Mark and Matthew let the reader believe that those who made the demonstration, when Jesus entered the city, were chiefly citizens of the capital; and John evidently thinks the people from Jerusalem came out to see the Lazarus miracle, and many of them believed. Again, we must suppose that these conspirators did not know that Jesus and his disciples also might have left the city and the country during the seven days of the feast, which would have frustrated their designs altogether. This view of the situation renders the whole proceedings unintelligible. First, they resolved not to do it on the feast-day, because they apprehended an uproar, and then they did do it after all, and on the very day. It must not be asserted that they changed resolves, because after the meeting Judas Iscariot betrayed his master; for his treachery had no influence on the people of whom an uproar was apprehended. The situation remained unchanged. Therefore, we are obliged to understand the words, "not on the feast-day," to convey the conspirators' resolution of executing their design before the feast-day, as on that day particularly the danger of an uproar threatened. Where was the particular danger just that day? Let us investigate.

III. THE SITUATION.

Luke (xxii. 1) understood the statements of Mark and Matthew exactly as we do. He says:

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people."

It was not exactly two days before the feast; the time set by Mark and Matthew is too short for the transaction. It was shortly before the feast. The danger apprehended was connected especially with the feast of unleavened bread. Therefore the conspirators resolved to dispose of him before the feast. And why did they seek to kill him? "for they feared the people." They did not merely fear the people, in disposing of Jesus: they apprehended also an uproar on the feast, if he was permitted continuing his work among the people. So and not otherwise we can understand Luke.

Of what nature could that apprehended danger be? The conspirators could not have thought of the probability of a quarrel leading to excesses among the people on the feast; because the Synoptics give us to understand, everywhere, that the people were in favor of Jesus. His opponents were the high dignitaries, chief priests, scribes, etc., who could not be expected to make an uproar. Or was it all fanaticism on the part of the conspirators, as is generally supposed? If there was any special cause in the teachings of Jesus (which we can not discover) to ignite the fanaticism to bloodthirsty fury, then the question arises, Why were not the masses fanaticized? why just the leading class? As a general thing, fanaticism is sought first and foremost among the illiterate masses; last and least among the cultivated and refined ones. Besides, Caiaphas, with his chief priests and scribes, holding office under the Roman authority, were certainly less religious and patriotic—more Latinized and Paganized than the bulk of the people; hence, rather less zealous than others in matters of religion or national law. There is evidently a mystery at the bottom of the priests' conduct; a mystery which the expounders of the Gospel have not attempted to unravel. We think, however, its solution is plainly given in the words of John, and in cotemporary history and literature. Let us hear John first (xi. 45 to 50):

"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we left him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high-priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

Take away the marvelous embellishment and the anachronism from this piece; take also out of the account the Sanhedrin, none of which existed from 30 to 40 A. C., and here we have the key to the mystery: "If we let him thus go on, all will believe in him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" (land and people). There is no fanaticism in these sober and political words.

Jesus had been proclaimed the Messiah, the ruler of the Jews, and the restorer of the kingdom of heaven. No Roman ear could understand these pretensions, otherwise than in their rebellious sense. No Roman had ever distinguished between a spiritual and political kingdom of heaven. The proclamations of the disciples, if supported by the demonstrations of the multitude, could have been called rebellion only by the Roman authorities. There was the danger. Immediate precedences justified those apprehensions. Because a Jewish vagabond in Rome, with three men as his accomplices, obtained purple and gold of Fluvia for the temple of Jerusalem, and turned it to their own use, the emperor Tiberius drove all the Jews out of Rome, took four thousand of them and sent them as soldiers to the pestilential island of Sardinia, and punished a greater number of them, who were unwilling to become soldiers. (Joseph. Ant., xviii., iii. 5.) At that particular time, this was justice in Rome—at least justice to the Jews. Not only this case, but another of the same outrageous character, was fresh in the memory of those men. A religious enthusiast called the Samaritans together on their holy Mount Gerizzim, where he promised to work miracles for them. Some people going there congregrated at Tirathaba, where Pilate's men who had seized the roads, attacked those pilgrims, killed many of them, took many prisoners, the principal of which, and also the most potent of those that fled away, Pilate ordered to be slain (Joseph. Ant. xviii., iv. 1, and Luke xiii. 1). Shortly before this, a large number of unarmed men were attacked

by Pilate's disguised soldiers and slain by the scores in Jerusalem, because they complained in a public meeting over Pilate's pillage of the temple treasury. (Joseph., *ibid.* xviii., iii. 2.) Scenes of this nature were not seldom in Jerusalem. On the slightest pretense the Roman soldiers massacred and pillaged. The avarice of the Roman officials, the bloodthirst of their hirelings, and the brutality of their provincial policy, fully justified the apprehension of those men. "If we let him thus go on, all will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation." Although this was certainly written after the destruction of Jerusalem, still in the main it was correct also in the days of Pilate. The multitude did not mind this danger, as enthusiastic masses never see far beyond the memento of their enthusiasm. But the wealthy citizens of Jerusalem, the heads and politicians of the people, who must have known the feelings and intentions of Pilate, dreaded a demonstration in favor of the proclaimed Messiah, which they knew must have ended in a bloody carnage and general pillage, followed by executions and confiscations, to gratify the domineering avarice and bloodthirsty barbarism.

Caiaphas, according to John, Caiaphas was the heartless man (or probably did he utter the words with a bleeding heart— who knows?) who uttered the fatal words—political necessity demands from our hands the life of that man: "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Political necessity is the horrible phrase which has cost the lives of ten thousands of the best and noblest of mankind. The mind shudders at the contemplation of all the executions and assassinations in behalf of political necessity, recorded in history. Think for a moment of the armies slaughtered but lately on our continent, from political necessity. Think of the late victims in East India, in Poland, in Paris— anywhere almost, and you will easily comprehend the curse, the bloody import of the phrase, political necessity. Was Caiaphas a tool of Rome, and wished to please his masters by the prevention of a great popular insurrection, among his people? or was he a patriot who really dreaded prospective consequences? or did he know certainly what was coming, and meant fully what he said? Our conscience revolting against the shedding of innocent blood from political necessity, is naturally against Caiaphas and

his coadjutors. Still we have no right to condemn where we can not ascertain the motives. Only He who is omniscient is the competent judge in this case.

Thus the situation is explained. The teachings of Jesus in Jerusalem had excited the closest attention of the assembled multitudes, and challenged the vigilance and jealousy of the Roman authorities. A great demonstration in his favor was expected during the feast, when the number of pilgrims amounted to over two millions, according to Josephus. The high-priest and the men around him apprehended the pretext for carnage, pillage, and national calamity, and resolved upon disposing of Jesus in time, as a political necessity. But they dreaded the ire and fury of the masses, and could not capture Jesus in the temple. Outside thereof, he was so jealously guarded in his secret abodes, that they could not discover him. In this dilemma Judas Iscariot came and offered to betray the Master, and to deliver him into their hands in the silence of night. The motives of Judas must be ascertained elsewhere in this treatise.

Why was the uproar, or rather the popular demonstration, in favor of Jesus expected on the first day of the feast? Because the first day all pilgrims were in the city and in the vicinity of the temple mount, and all the citizens of Jerusalem were disengaged. The second day many of the pilgrims left (Deuter., xvi. 7), and many of the citizens of Jerusalem went about their usual business (Levit., xxiii. 7, 8). Besides, for those who believed in a Messiah to come, he had to make his appearance on the Feast of Passover. It was believed "on this day they (Israel) were redeemed, and on it they will be redeemed hereafter."* (Mechilta, Bo xiv.)

Therefore the first day of the Passover feast was selected for a public demonstration, to proclaim the Messiah and the kingdom, by the assembled multitude, in strict conformity to the prejudices of those who believed, as the whole Messianic scheme, from beginning to end, had been conducted. It was this demonstration which the conspirators meant to frustrate, by disposing of Jesus before the feast.

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* כו נגאלו ובו עתידין להגאל

IV. POLITICAL NECESSITY AND JEWISH ETHICS.

The idea of vicarious atonement, in any form, is contrary to Jewish ethics. The Law ordains (Deut., xxv. 16), "A man shall be put to death for his own sin," and not for the sin or crime committed by any other person. No ransom should protect the murderer against the arm of justice. (Numbers, xxxv., 31 to 34.) The principle of equal rights and equal responsibilities is fundamental in the Law. If the Law of God—and as such it was received—denounces the vicarious atonement, viz., to slaughter an innocent person to atone for the crimes of others, then God must abhor it. So the ancient Hebrews must have reasoned. When Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, God taught him that He accepts no human victim. When Moses prayed for Israel having made the golden calf, he offered himself a vicarious atonement for his people.* But God replied, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." This says at once and emphatically, God accepts no vicarious atonement, and is in full consonance with the analogous principle of the Law. Therefore, from the standpoint of Israel's religion and law, Caiaphas and his conspirators had no right to sacrifice Jesus from motives of political necessity.

Two cases, recorded in the Bible, appear contrary to the above principle. The first is that of Achan, the son of Charmi (Joshua, vii. 16),† and the second is that of Seba, the son of Bichri (2 Samuel xx). However, both of them are supposed to be criminals: the former violated martial law in time of war, and the latter headed a rebellion against King David. Still the expounders of the law considered both cases violations of first principles. They criticised Joshua as mildly as they could, by maintaining, Achan was admitted to eternal life and happiness. In the case of Seba, son of Bichri, they tell us the following story, very important in this connection:

"When Nebuchadnezzar came up to destroy Jerusalem, he stopped at Daphne of Antioch. The great Sanhedrin went there to meet him. They asked him, 'Has the time come for this house to be destroyed?' He replied, 'No; but Joachim has rebelled against me. Deliver him up to

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* Compare in Exodus xxxii., verses 31 and 32, to verse 10.
† See Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin vi. 3.

me, and I will go.' The men came to Joachim and said, 'Nebuchadnezzar wants thee.' Then he said, 'Are you dealing thus, abandoning one life for another, abandoning my life to save yours? Is it not written in the Law, Thou shalt not deliver up a servant to his master?' They replied, 'Thy sire (David) has not heeded this in the case of Seba, son of Bichri.' As he would not listen to them, they took him, bound him, delivered him up to the king, and he was killed with great cruelty. Nebuchadnezzar appointed in place of Joachim, his son Jechoniah. When he arrived at his home, all the Babylonians went forth to salute him. They asked, 'What hast thou done?' to which he replied, 'Joachim rebelled against me, I slew him, and appointed Jechoniah in his place.' But they said, 'The proverb is, Raise not the good dog of a wicked breed, much less the wicked dog of a wicked breed.' He took the advice and returned to Daphne of Antioch. Again the great Sanhedrin came to meet him, and asked, 'Has the time come for this house to be destroyed?' He said, 'No; give me him whom I have made king, and I will leave.' They went to Jechoniah and said, 'Nebuchadnezzar wants thee.' Hereupon Jechoniah took all the keys of the temple, went up to the top of the roof, and said, 'O God, thou dost consider us worthy no longer to be thy stewards. Hitherto we were thy faithful husbandmen; but now—here are thy keys.' Some maintain, a hand of fire came out of heaven and received the keys. Others say, he threw them heavenward, and they fell down no more. Then the young men of Israel mounted their roofs and threw themselves down. So Nebuchadnezzar came, took Jechoniah and put him in a dungeon, and none of those captured with him ever left their prison; and he exiled Jechoniah and the great Sanhedrin with him."*

We have translated literally and all of it; because it is directly to the point at issue, so that one feels tempted to believe it was written to illustrate the very case of Caiaphas *versus* Jesus. We learn from this *Yerushalmi* passage, in the first place, that the conduct of David or his

* Yerushalmi Shekalim, vi. 3. This passage is entirely disfigured by omissions, in the Krotoschin edition of 1866; although it is complete in the large *Ein Jacob*, Furth, Part ii., No. 45; and with additional glossaries in Leviticus Rabbah, chapter xvi., toward the end.

captain toward Seba, son of Bichri, was considered a crime. David had set a precedence, for which after four centuries his scion, Joachim, suffered. Caiaphas might have pointed to the same precedence in regard to Jesus, if he had maintained to be a Davidian. But he never did. On the contrary, he denied it in clear language.* It was maintained for him, after his death, in order to fit certain Bible passages into his life and the Messianic drama.

In the next place, we learn from the above *Yerushalmi* passage, that the conduct of the Sanhedrin toward King Joachim also was considered a crime, notwithstanding the precedence. For not only did the treachery do them no good, as Nebuchadnezzar returns and after all punishes them, but also their conduct on the second occasion proves that they were wrong in the first act. The second time they say, they would not save God's temple by treachery and wickedness; the young men preferred suicide to treason, and the great Sanhedrin went into exile with their king, in preference to betraying him. The French magnates have not done so to Napoleon I., after the battle of Waterloo. These sacrifices, however, were not made, because Jechoniah was their king; they were made because it was a fundamental principle of the law, based upon Deuteronomy, xxiii. 16: life must not be saved by sacrificing any innocent man. Therefore any private citizen had precisely the same right and the same claim to the nation's protection, as King Jechoniah had; and the advice of Caiaphas, concerning Jesus, was given in violation of a fundamental principle of Jewish law.

In the third place, the passage before us suggests, that the principle in question was considered so well established and so old, that the tradition committed to writing in the third century A. C., places it up into the sixth century B. C., as well known and well understood then by no less an authority than the great Sanhedrin, then the highest one of the nation at that time. In common law, traditions of this kind are of the utmost importance, and so this was to the ancient expounders of Jewish law. On proper occasions, it re-appears as an undisputed principle throughout the Mishna, Talmud, and Midrash. It was cast into the formula אין דוחין נפש מפני נפש "No human life must be abandoned on account of any

* Mark, xii. 35 to 37, and parallel passages.

(other) life;" or literally, "We abandon no person on account of a person."* Therefore, when in the beginning of the second century A. C., the violent persecutions, chiefly against the observation of Jewish law and custom, rendered it necessary that the teachers should advise the people to abandon every law and custom of Israel whenever necessary to save human life, and it had been made a maxim, "Whoever saves one life in Israel, has done as well as though he had observed all the Law; and whoever sacrifices one is as wicked as though he had transgressed every provision of the Law;" also then it was maintained, that all the laws and customs may be set aside to save life, except these three—viz., IDOLATRY, INCEST, and MURDER. By either of these crimes, none must save either his own life or that of others. The Talmud comments on this last point thus: "Who will tell that thy blood is redder (or sweeter)? perhaps the blood of that (sacrificed) man is reder than thine." Glossaries have added thereto, "To suffer martyrdom is one sin, viz., the destruction of human life; to escape it by murder is a double sin, viz. murder to the subject and destruction of human life to the object." The principle under discussion was also applied in the law of self-defense, but this is foreign to our purpose, although it ought to be studied by some of our legislators and judges. Only in case of a direct attack upon a person with the intent to kill, and the attack can not be dodged or repelled without murder, not even by the sacrifice of a limb, the law acknowledges the maxim of Rabbi Akiba חייך קודמים לחיי חבירך: "Thy life has the precedence to the life of thy neighbor," viz., in the Biblical passage, "That thy brother live with thee." In all other cases the law adheres to the principle under discussion, as exemplified by Ben Petora: "If two travel in the wilderness, and but one of them has left a bottle of water; if both drink thereof, both must die before they can reach an inhabited place, and if only one drinks thereof, he may live to reach an inhabited place, and his neighbor dies—how must he do? They must divide the water, and die both."†

There can not be any reasonable doubt, that the Jewish

* Babli, Sanhedrin 72 *b.*, and parallel passages.

† Saphra, Behar, Paresah v.; Baba Mezia, 62 *a.*

law in the time of Jesus was based upon the principle of solidarity, viz., the State has the duty to protect with all its power every one of its members, and has no right whatever to withdraw this protection from any one, however useful, beneficial, or prudent his death may appear to one, more, or all persons, unless he be a criminal convicted according to law, of a crime which the law punishes with death. The moralists of those days went so far in this point as to maintain, it was not merely the letter of the law, but it was the deeply seated sentiment of the Hebrew people. One of them said this: "Israel is a scattered sheep (flock), said the prophet Jeremiah (L. 17). It was Nebuchadnezzar who compared Israel to a wounded sheep. As a sheep wounded in one of its limbs feels it in all of them, so Israel; if one of them is killed, all the others feel it and feel the affliction. It is otherwise among Heathens; if one of them is killed, all the others rejoice over his downfall."* The rabbinical formula for the principle of solidarity is: כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה "All Israel are surety for one another."

The Hebrew people had just set an example of their fidelity to the laws, which Caiaphas might have imitated. Josephus narrates (Antiq., xviii., iii.) when Pontius Pilate removed his army from Cesarea to Jerusalem, he had the intention to abolish the Jewish laws. He began with having carried into the city the ensigns with Cæsar's effigy on them. Multitudes of Jews came to Cesarea to remonstrate against this violation of the law; but Pilate insisted upon it. Not being able to pacify the Jews or to get them out of Cesarea, he gave orders to his soldiers to surround the square of the judgment seat. When the Jews came again, he ordered the soldiers to surround them, and then he threatened the petitioners with instant death, unless they would leave him forthwith and go home. "But they threw themselves upon the ground, and laid their necks bare, and said they would take their death very willingly, rather than the wisdom of their laws should be transgressed." This moved Pilate to countermand his orders and to have the images carried back from Jerusalem. In the face of this fact, the high-priest and his conspirators had no excuse for the violation

* Mechilta, Mesichta, Debachodesh, II.

of the law. It was their duty to exercise their influence upon the people, to keep the peace, to act prudently and cautiously, or to send Jesus and his disciples to a foreign country to stay there until the mania abated.

So we are led back to our starting-point in this chapter. These chief priests and scribes, who conspired against Jesus, were no representative men in Israel. They were Israel's despots and the tools of Roman masters. This doctrine of political necessity, first uttered by another Roman hireling, Herod of Galilee,* was not of Jewish origin, and received not the sanction of the Jews. It was truly Roman; so much so, that also the very first Christian princes on Rome's throne, the sons of Constantine the Great, assassinated their cousins from motives of political necessity.† In the Roman law the State is the main object, for which the individual must live and die, with or against his will. In Jewish law, the person is the main object for which the State must live and die; because the fundamental idea of the Roman law is power, and the fundamental idea of Jewish law is justice. Therefore Caiaphas and his conspirators did not act from the Jewish standpoint. They represented Rome, her principles, interests, and barbarous caprices.

CHAPTER II.

THE LAST SUPPER.

I. THE TWO ACCOUNTS.

A review of the "Last Supper" which Jesus took with his select disciples, as reported by the evangelists, will disclose another feature of the story, the very counterpart of the one just exhibited.

The Synoptics agree that Jesus ate his last meal in the city of Jerusalem, with his twelve select disciples, and that meal was the Paschal supper, which all Hebrews in the city, residents and pilgrims, ate with great solemnity, after the lambs or kids had been slaughtered in the tem-

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* Josephus, Antiqu. xvii., v. 2.

† Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, iv. century, 1, part 1, xi.

ple court, and the blood sprinkled as the Law prescribes. John also speaks of a last supper which Jesus ate with his chosen disciples (John, xiii. 2, 4), but he says it was before Easter (verse 1), consequently it was not the Paschal supper, especially as according to John the crucifixion took place the day before the feast (*Ibid.*, xix. 14), and the Paschal lamb was slaughtered in the afternoon of that very day, the fourteenth day of Nissan, to be consumed that evening at the opening of the feast. This was the law in Israel, as ordained in Exodus (xii., 1 to 28).

No doubt is left as to the time when the Paschal lamb was killed and the flesh eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The Law is explicit on this point. It appoints the fourteenth day of Nissan for this observance (Exodus, xii. 6, and Numbers, ix., 1 to 5). It permits only one exception to this rule, viz., for those who are unclean or out on a long journey, who might make the Passa the fourteenth day of the next month (*Ibid.*, 9 to 14). In both cases it stipulates the precise time, "between twilight," of the fourteenth to the fifteenth day. So was the Passover kept by Joshua (v. 10), by Hezekiah (2 Chron., xxx. 15), by Joshiah (*Ibid.*, xxxviii. 1), and by Zerubabel (Ezra, vi. 19). The Bible adheres strictly to the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, as the time of the Paschal meal.

The next source before us, to ascertain this point, is the Mishnah, and there (Pesachim v.) the precise time is stated. The slaughtering of the lambs began after the evening sacrifice was finished, on the fourteenth day of Nissan, and no other day, which was half past two P. M., except on Friday, when it was done at half past one P. M., on account of the approaching Sabbath. So the slaughtering of the lambs began about three P. M., or on Friday at two P. M. The approach of the evening closed the slaughtering, the people left the temple mount, roasted the lambs and ate the Paschal meal. Exactly the same time is mentioned by Josephus (Wars, vi., ix. 3): "From the ninth hour to the eleventh," which is from three to five P. M.

There is no opportunity left to the harmonizers to make one story of the two. According to John, Jesus ate no Paschal meal, did not live to see that feast again, was captured the evening before Passover, and was crucified

before the feast opened. According to the Synoptics, Jesus partook of the Paschal supper, was captured the first night of the feast, and executed on the first day thereof, which was on a Friday. We must necessarily drop one date. If John's is true, that of the Synoptics is not, or *vice versa*. Agreeably to our canon of criticism, we must drop John's date. The Church did the same. But at the same time it must be borne in mind that John, rejecting the Paschal supper and the establishment of the eucharist by Jesus—which he intentionally replaces by another solemn act, viz., the washing of the disciples' feet—either had strong dogmatical reasons for this change, or he considered the accounts of the Synoptics unhistorical, because he was in possession of other traditions. Adopting the first view leads to the conclusion, that the dogma or the observance to be set forth, had more weight with John than the historical fact. Adopting the second view leads to the conclusion, that at the time when John's gospel was written, it was by no means certain or generally believed by Christians, that Jesus ate the Paschal meal, as his last supper, and then and there established the eucharist, although Paul had said so. Following, as we must, the story of the Synoptics, we will now review it in detail.

II. THE MESSENGERS AND THE CHARGE.

Mark (xiv. 12) and Matthew (xxvi. 17) report that on the fourteenth day of Nissan the disciples asked Jesus where he wished to eat the Paschal lamb; so that it appears, he did not think of it, had not the disciples suggested it. There is a difference in the name which these two evangelists give to that day. Matthew calls it the first day *of the feast* of the unleavened bread, and Mark calls it the first day of unleavened bread; nevertheless both refer to the same day, which was a feast in Galilee, no work being done that day, and was none in Judea, where manual labor was suspended only in the afternoon; while in both provinces, no leavened bread was used that day after the fifth hour, so that it was properly called the first day of unleavened bread.

But this merely proves, that Mark wrote from traditions current in Judea, and Matthew derived his from Galilee,* where this custom was observed also in the second

* Mishnah, Pesachim iv. 5.

century,* and is one more evidence in our favor concerning Mark.

Luke (xxii. 7) differs from his two predecessors in two points. He does not say that the disciples reminded Jesus, but he on his own account sent two of them to the city to prepare the meal; and states plainly it was not on the fourteenth day of Nissan but at least one day previous, as is evident from his expression, "Then came the day of unleavened bread," so that it had not come yet. Luke adds the names of those two disciples, Peter and John. One might be led to believe, he had additional and reliable sources and contradicts his colleagues, therefore, in the important moments of time, motive, and persons—if it was not so extremely easy to discover his motives. Luke was the author of the Acts of the Apostles, or at least a portion thereof. In that book, Peter and John are represented as the heads of the Apostolic college, after the death of Jesus. By what right did they occupy that position? They were neither more learned nor more inspired than the others. Luke looks ahead, and has them appointed by Jesus as his messengers to prepare the Passover for him. It was a rule among the ancient Hebrews, "A man's messenger is like unto himself," *i. e.*, he exercises the same authority, in certain points, of course. This rule was derived from the ancient custom prevailing in preparing the Passover lamb, which, according to the letter of the Law (Exodus, xii. 3), ought to be provided and slaughtered by every Israelite for himself, but it was held, it might be done by a messenger.† This was written in the *Mechilta* of Rabbi Ishmael (Bo, chapters iii. and v.), which Luke must have seen, as that rabbi was an elder contemporary of Mark. Luke embraced this favorable opportunity to have Peter and John appointed to exercise the authority of Jesus, most likely with the intention of conciliation among Paul-Christians and Peter-Christians, each of whom claimed direct appointment for their respective apostle. But we will not argue this point now, as we must chronicle several other points in this chapter, in which Luke departs from the statements of his predecessors.

Mark informs us next, that Jesus sent two of his dis-

* Ibid 6.

† כבאן אמרו שלוחו של אדם כמוהו are the words in the Mechilta.

ciples to the city, and told them this: "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, the Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them; and they made ready the Passover." There are two miracles in this account. The first is the man with the pitcher of water who should guide the disciples to the right house, which is an imitation of Rebecca guiding Elieser to the right place, when he met her at the well (Genesis, xxiv.); and of the widow at Zarephath, whom Elijah met somewhere near the well, to lead him to her house (1 Kings, xvii. 8); only that in Mark's account, the damsel and the widow are replaced by a man. How did Mark come by this embellishment? He imitated the old rabbinical story of the prophet Elijah and that widow, whose son died suddenly, and that son was no other personage, according to tradition, than Jonah. The widow accused the prophet, her son had died on account of his presence in her house. Then Elijah prayed, "O Lord of the universe, is it not enough that so many afflictions have passed over my head: why must I also bear the accusation of this hapless woman? O teach coming generations that the dead will resurrect; give back the soul to this child." God granted his prayer, and the rabbis learn from the event that the dead will resurrect in reward of charity.* Mark begins here a story, the end of which is the resurrection of Jesus. The object of this resurrection was the same, as expressed in Elijah's prayer, that coming generations (or the present generation with Paul) may know that the dead will resurrect. Having this popular legend before him, Mark, or somebody before him, was naturally led back to Elijah's arrival at Zarephath—the well, the pitcher of water, the marvelous discovery of the right house in the two cases mentioned; and he embellished his story accordingly.

The next miracle in Mark's narrative is, that a man in Jerusalem should have vacant a furnished and prepared upper room, when two millions of pilgrims sojourned in

* Pirke Rabbi Elieser, Chapter 33.

and around the city. The man, it appears, was not distinguished for either wealth or piety; for his name is not mentioned, he was not present at the supper, and no further reference is made to him. It rather appears Mark thought of an ordinary man, who had a furnished room to let for such purposes, and Jesus knew it prophetically. Mark had not far to travel to discover that room, only from Elijah to his disciple Elisha, for whom that great woman of Shonem, the Shunamith, had furnished so richly an upper chamber (2 Kings, iv. 8). Why should not somebody have also furnished an upper room for the Messiah?

Matthew, it appears, understood that these embellishments were mere imitations. and therefore his account of the affair runs thus: Jesus simply said to some of his disciples—the number is not given—"Go into the city, to such a man, and say unto him, the Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them." No pitcher, no man, no water, no miracle at all is mentioned in this simple order and its execution. Matthew would not even take for granted that just two of his disciples went on that errand; two, more. or all of them may have gone to the city, and Jesus met them at the appointed house and hour, as it actually appears from verse 20.

Imagine now the dilemma of Luke with these two conflicting accounts before him. The best he could do was, to make use of both. In the eighth verse, he uses the account of Matthew. In the ninth he introduces the new question, "Where shall we prepare it?" to bring in literally, in verse ten, etc., the account of Mark. It was too much for Luke that Jesus should have waited to the last day with the preparation for the Paschal meal, and that then he had to be reminded of it by his disciples; therefore, in the first instance, he changed the accounts of Matthew and Mark. He could not well omit Mark's miracles in his account, being a welcome embellishment, nor could he ignore Matthew's simple narrative of the affair; and he contrived to unite them into one. Remarkable, however, it might appear, that Matthew alone has the words, "My time is at hand." But the thing is simple. Mark and Luke having brought in the prophetical knowl-

edge of Jesus by the miracles mentioned, had no necessity for the words of Matthew put in with the same intention, because he rejected those miracles.

It is evident, however, that neither of these accounts was taken from any original gospel; that none of the evangelists cared particularly to report correctly the words of Jesus; that Mark may have been the inventor of those miracles, or he may have received them traditionally of the congregation where he lived, while Matthew's congregation did not have that tradition; and that we do not know what Jesus said on that occasion. The only fact in which the Synoptics agree, is that Jesus sent some of his disciples to the city, to make secret preparations to eat together the Paschal meal; and also this is doubtful, not merely on account of the silence of John on all these points, but on account of the miracles and prophetical vision in this connection, and the outspoken object of each evangelist in shaping the story as he did.

Important in this fact, if such it is, is the secrecy. Jesus, or his disciples, must have known well that he was not safe anywhere in the city, except among the crowd on the temple mount. The evangelists give us to understand that he never remained in the city over night; while Luke expressly states (xxii. 39) that Jesus went the last night to the Mount of Olives, "as he was wont," viz., as he did every night. It appears even, that in the suburbs also, he preferred the least occupied spots, in order to evade discovery and surprise. Therefore the evangelists agree that he took meals in the house of Simon the leper, since the lepers' homes were shunned by every Hebrew, as they are to-day in the same locality, by the inhabitants not afflicted with that horrible disease.

III. THE OPENING OF THE SUPPER.

When it was evening, as Matthew says; or in the evening, as Mark has it—the proper time was before the approach of night—Jesus sat down with twelve of his disciples to eat the Paschal supper. According to Mark and Matthew, the solemn meal was opened without grace or benediction. During the meal Jesus spoke of him who would betray him. No ceremony was performed until the meal was nearly over, when Jesus broke the bread and spoke the benediction over the wine. If any evidence is required that neither Mark nor Matthew had

ever seen the Paschal meal, or described that of Jesus, it is furnished right here. They do not mention any one point connected with the Paschal supper, the ceremonies of which were established, as we shall describe below. They mention only one ceremony, viz., the breaking of the bread, and the cup of wine after the meal, which is not only a mistake, but shows conclusively that either of them had seen the Paschal supper, after the destruction of Jerusalem, in some Jewish house, and the ceremonies connected therewith, called the *Seder*. Therefore no mention whatsoever is made of the main thing—the Paschal lamb—and the bread is broken after the meal, which was done by the Jews after closing the Paschal meal, outside of Jerusalem, when the altar had been destroyed; and no Paschal lamb was eaten. They called that last piece of bread *Aphikoman*, and still call it so, to take the place of the dessert after the meal.

The ceremonies at the Paschal meal in Jerusalem—the altar still in existence—are minutely and precisely described in the Mishnah (Pesachim x.) and elsewhere. The proceedings were thus: All leaning upon the cushions around the table, the first cup of wine was served, and grace pronounced over the same and the feast, in words still preserved in every Hebrew prayer-book. This cup of wine being disposed of, vegetables and sauce were placed on the table, and the vegetables, dipped in the sauce, were blessed and eaten. Next the unleavened bread, the bitter herb, and a piquant sauce called *Haroseth*—still well known among Jews—were served, and the bitter herb, dipped in the *Haroseth*, was blessed and eaten. Then the Paschal lamb was placed on the table with portions of another sacrifice. One of the company asked the question, why all this was done, during which the second cup of wine was served. The head of the table explaining, narrated the story of the exode, closed with a hymn, spoke the second time grace over the wine, and all disposed of the same. Now came the breaking of the bread and the eating and drinking. This finished, the third cup of wine was served, and grace after meal was pronounced. After which the fourth cup was served, and the ceremonies closed with hymns and psalms, and disposing of the fourth cup of wine.

Luke was aware that Mark and Matthew had not given

a correct description of the Paschal supper, and attempted to improve the report. He begins the supper thus:

"And he said unto them: With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said: Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me."

Luke begins correctly, but makes a mistake in having the bread broken right after the first cup of wine was handed round, which was done so at every festive meal, except at the one described, and has but two cups of wine instead of four. So we know that Luke did not describe what actually happened that evening. He had seen the Jewish custom of opening the festive meals with grace over the wine and bread, and made of it an introduction to the last supper, without knowing that just that evening the custom was changed. Knowing this, we also know what to think of the words, which Luke only has Jesus to say, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you." They are certainly Luke's. He found no mention in Mark and Matthew of the main thing—the Passover lamb—and must have known that on account of the flesh of the lamb, Jesus, at the risk of his life, went to Jerusalem. Every other dish or meal he might have enjoyed outside of the city, in his silent retreat, and in the undisturbed company of his friends, without apprehension of being surprised by his enemies. But the flesh of the Paschal lamb—such was the law (Deut. xvi. 5)—had to be eaten within the limits of the city of Jerusalem,* in a house or court, and not in the street.† Therefore Jesus had to go to a room in Jerusalem, and went there even at the risk of his life. Nevertheless neither Matthew nor Mark makes the least mention of the lamb itself or the eating thereof. Therefore Luke thought proper to write the above introductory words. So we do not know what Jesus did or said before eating that last supper.

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* See Maimonides; H. Korban Pesach, i. 3, and the sources *in loco cit.*

† Ibid., i. 5.

IV. JUDAS ISCARIOT AND THE SITUATION.

What did Jesus say or do during the meal? Mark (xiv. 18) replies thus:

"And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born."

Matthew adds to this (xxvi. 25) that Judas asked Jesus, "Master, is it I?" to which Jesus replied, "Thou hast said it." According to Mark, Jesus suspected one of the twelve without naming him; but according to Matthew, the suspected one was Judas Iscariot, and Jesus said so to his face. Luke informs us (xxii. 23) that the disciples inquired among themselves who of them might be the traitor, and brings in a new conversation: "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest," which ends with the exoneration of Peter, that he was not the traitor, and leaving one to believe that the eleven remaining might all have been the traitors in the estimation of Jesus. We have evidently to deal here with two different narratives: one that Jesus pointed out the traitor, and another that he did not. This difference is very important. If Jesus indeed pointed out, before all the disciples, Judas as the suspected traitor, we can only understand it as an indirect suggestion to go and to commit the treachery forthwith. "Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly" (John, xxiii. 27). The mortification of Judas at being thus accused and exposed is sufficient to drive any man to villainy if he has not a character of solid principles. The only question in this point, is, whether Matthew's report is correct: and this is decided by John in favor of Matthew. Although John denies the Paschal supper, changes the words of Jesus and the entire situation, and makes use of this particular occasion to glorify Peter and John, as Luke had done before; still he confirms the statement of Matthew, that Jesus pointed out Judas as the traitor, induced him indirectly to do his work speedily, and giving him the signal by a sop handed to him, prompted him to do the deed now and forthwith (John, xiii. 21 to

30). It must be borne in mind that with Mark and John Judas does not commit suicide. The differences in the narratives of Matthew and Luke (in the Acts) concerning this suicide, point distinctly to mythical traditions; and John (xviii. 5, 9), in his narrative of the capture of Jesus, almost exonerates Judas; at any rate, he modifies the crime very considerably.

Why did Jesus suggest to Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly?" The matter appears very plain to us. Like Caiaphas and his conspirators, Jesus must have been aware of the state of political affairs. Like them, he must have dreaded the popular demonstration, ripe among his admirers, to burst forth the very next day. John (vi. 15) informs us plainly that Jesus would have been proclaimed King of Israel already in Galilee if he had not retreated "into a mountain himself alone." That Pontius Pilate certainly understood under the title, Messiah the king (the political chief of the nation), is evident from the superscription of the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," which he did not remove in spite of all protestations of the Jews. Like Caiaphas, Jesus also must have been convinced that such a demonstration would have cost thousands of lives, and would have been fraught with dire calamities to the whole people, without any hope of success, or even the slightest glimpse of good to be derived from the bloody conflict. He must have known that the combat, inevitably to follow that demonstration, first and foremost, would have cost the lives of his disciples and friends, and the blood thus shed—and uselessly shed, too—would naturally fall to his account before the omniscient Judge. On the other hand, he was in the hands of his disciples and friends, who protected and guarded him faithfully and jealously, so that his secret abode could not easily be discovered. Among them there were certainly not a few patriotic enthusiasts who acted with the agitated multitude, and waited impatiently for the demonstration to see the Master proclaimed King of Israel, who believed in the success of their policy, notwithstanding the huge power of Rome. Mad enterprises of this kind were not rare at that time among the Hebrew people. Tens of thousands of patriotic men and women lost their lives in such futile attempts, relying upon supernatural aid. In this dilemma, Jesus resolved magnanimously to sacrifice himself to save the

lives of his disciples and friends, and to protect his people against the carnage, pillage, and calamity which otherwise would have been sure to come. A speedy realization of his resolution was necessary; a few hours later it might have been too late. But he was in the hands of his disciples, from which there was no escape. Therefore he forcibly suggested to Judas Iscariot to go and complete his treachery as fast as possible. Let us follow the matter up from the beginning.

Mark, Matthew, and John agree that Jesus and his disciples enjoyed a sumptuous meal at the house of Simon the leper. John adds (xii. 2), that Lazarus was one of the guests, and Martha waited upon them. While at table, so Mark informs us, "there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box and poured it on his head." So also Matthew says, and omits only the breaking of the box. John changes the unknown woman into Mary, omits the breaking of the box, has the feet of Jesus instead of his head anointed, and adds the wiping of Jesus' feet with her hair, which he has taken from Luke (vii. 38). Mark then observes: "And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of ointment made?" Matthew confirms this, and adds that the "some" of Mark were "his (Jesus') disciples." Strange, however, John denies that those who felt indignation were "some disciples," but maintains it was Judas Iscariot only. The three accounts agree, that Jesus took the part of the anointing woman, and said she had anointed his body for the burial. Why was this costly box broken? Why was the precious ointment, worth over three hundred pence, poured on his head? Why the indignation? Why does this incidence prompt Judas to betray his master, in which all accounts agree? Why did John change the anecdote? The breaking of the box shows that a holy ceremony, and not a profane act, was performed. "The vessel used to holy purposes must not be used again to profane purposes," was an established usage among the ancient Hebrews; therefore, in numerous instances, such vessels were broken. The anointing upon the head was intended to pour upon Jesus the sign and symbol of royalty. *Meshah*, the root of *Meshiah*, or Messiah, as the Galileans pronounced it,

signifies, to anoint, and the Messiah is the anointed one, the king. None of the kings of Israel was styled the Messiah, unless he was anointed. According to the opinion of some, not only every high-priest but also every king of the house of David had to be anointed.*

The whole scene, as Mark and Matthew give it, bears so striking a resemblance to the one described in the second book of Kings (chap. ix), Jehu being anointed king of Israel, that the intention of the story becomes evident at once. In the case of Jehu, it is a lad, a prophetical disciple of Elisha, sent by that prophet to Ramoth Gilead, where he finds Jehu sitting among the other captains or princes of the host, exactly as Jesus is represented to have sat among his disciples. Having led Jehu alone in a room, the lad pours the oil (or the ointment of spikenard) upon his head, and says: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over God's people, over Israel." The lad disappears, and Jehu on request communicates to the other princes what the lad had done and said, upon which "they took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and they blew the cornet, saying, "Jehu is king." This is the beginning of a revolution in the kingdom of Israel. The house of Ahab is exterminated, and the Jehu dynasty founded. It was the party of action among the admirers of Jesus that had him anointed by a woman (women take the part of those lads of the prophets in the entire Gospel story), in the expectation that his disciples would do the same as the princes did to Jehu—proclaim him king of Israel, and thus start the revolution at once. But there were some among the disciples, Mark informs us, that had indignation within themselves, and said, "Why was this waste of the ointment made?" Those *some*, according to Matthew all of the disciples, which is certainly doubtful, like Jesus himself, were not willing to hurl the people into a rebellion, in which success was impossible, carnage and pillage certain. Therefore they murmured against the woman, apparently because the money thus squandered might have been given to the poor; in reality, however, they remonstrated against the plot. Jesus observing the dissension, quiets it at once, defending the woman thus: "She had done what she could," (viz.,

*Talmud Babli Cherithoth, 5 *b*.

in the mission she had to fulfill); "she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying," not to be king, but to be buried, repudiating at once the idea of siding with the party of action, and giving them fully to understand that they forced him to sacrifice himself in order to save the lives of many.*

Thus, and thus only, the conduct of Judas Iscariot becomes intelligible. Right after this happened, Mark tells us, "And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them." So also Matthew and John have it. Judas, like Jesus and Caiaphas, saw the approach of the calamitous catastrophe, and must have known the resolution of Jesus, rather to die than to permit his disciples and his people to rush madly into the abyss of certain death; therefore he went to the chief priests to betray his secret abode, under the impression, however, that Jesus would not be put to death (Matthew, xxvii. 3). John alone changes this record of his predecessors, and maintains it was Judas only who was offended by the anointing scene, because he was a thief, and tries to explain his treachery by mercenary motives. But he does not succeed. The thirty silver-pieces† are too small an amount, especially for one who had the treasury of the whole company of Jesus, to tempt him to so base an act. Besides, he went to the chief priests before he knew they would give him anything, and returned the money after Jesus had been condemned to die. This does not look like avarice. It is not in the plot of John's gospel to let Jesus die for his own; he must die because it was so foreordained in the plan of Providence. Therefore he admits not the real object of the anointing scene; says the woman was Mary, who did it from gratitude and personal attachment, and she did not anoint his head but his feet, which is no sign of royal anointment. Therefore he could do no better than aseribe to Judas avarice as the motive of his treachery. But the testimony of Mark and Matthew is better than John's, in historical points. Besides, Luke, who changes the whole story of the last supper, and on the same ground which led John to change the story of the meal in the house of Simon the leper, omits this alto-

* Verse nine in Mark is evidently a later addition, as the word *Evangelion* used there proves.

† The thirty silver-pieces are not a fact but an imitation of Zachariah, xi. 12, 13, as is evident from Matthew, xxvii. 5.

gether ; still does not ascribe avarice to Judas, but says in general terms (which John copied), "Then entered Satan into Judas," etc., "and he went his way and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them."

The treacherous intentions and covenanting with the chief priests, being known to Jesus, it matters not by what means, he suggested to Judas, at the last supper, to go and accomplish his purpose at once. Luke gives as a particular reason for this urgency, the strife of the disciples, which of them should be accounted the greatest. Although Luke (ix. 46) gives to this strife a purely spiritual tenor, still the first source from which he took it, as introduced at the last supper—viz., Mark (x. 28) and Matthew (xix. 27)—speak distinctly of worldly power and wealth, besides the promise of inheriting everlasting life. We quote the passage from Matthew :

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefor ? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

This explains the situation fully. Many disciples of Jesus had in view worldly power and wealth, as well as eternal life. They wanted the revolution, and had anxiously anticipated the outbreak thereof on the first day of the feast. They had arranged the anointing scene at the house of Simon the leper. Jesus was in their hands, and obliged either to stand at the head of a destructive rebellion, with no prospect of any success, or to sacrifice himself at once. He preferred the latter, and therefore urged upon Judas Iscariot the speedy execution of his designs.

V. THE EUCHARIST.

We have now arrived at the main point of the last supper, the supposed institution of the eucharist, which gave so much trouble to theologians, expounders, and harmonizers; and still more and worse affliction to millions of innocent persons, who refused to believe the doctrines connected with this outward observance, or the miraculous

change and supernatural effect of the bread and wine, because passing through the hands of a priest; then all those who were tortured and killed, because they had given offense to a host, had profaned it, cut it, stabbed it, and out came the blood, and such similar inventions of benighted ignorance.

We maintain, that never was a man's mission and intention more misconstrued than those of Jesus, by the priests, who instituted the sacrament of the eucharist, or the communion, as something indispensably necessary to a man's salvation. The same Jesus, it is supposed, who objected to all the sanctimonious observances of the Pharisees and priests, and looked upon outward piety, the religion of performances, as conductive to no good and productive of hypocrisy; who opposed the entire Levitical laws and institutions; the same Jesus is supposed to have instituted a new outward observance, and made it a condition, *sine qua non*, to obtain salvation. We furthermore believe to have a good right for maintaining, that no words of Jesus were worse misrepresented and misconstrued than those spoken at his last supper. Let us investigate.

Mark narrates: "And as they (the disciples) did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament (the new covenant) which is shed for many," etc. Matthew has the same description of the scene, the same brief words at the breaking of the bread; but at the wine he adds the words "for the remission of sins," thus bringing in an entirely new element, of which Mark has no knowledge. With Luke, however, the whole scene is changed. What Mark and Matthew have Jesus say after the wine after meal had been handed round, "I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine any more," etc., Luke has him say at the first cup. At the breaking of the bread Luke reports that Jesus said, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." In this case, one party, evidently, reports not the words of Jesus; for the commandment added by Luke, "This do in remembrance of me," according to all Christian theologians, is the main point to institute the sacrament. If

Jesus did enjoin this commandment on his disciples, how could Mark and Matthew neglect to state it? The words spoken on so solemn an occasion must certainly have made a deep and lasting impression on the disciples. How could it be, that the two elder evangelists should not have known them; or, knowing them, should have neglected to enjoin that new commandment, especially if it has the importance attached to it by the Church?

Besides, the additional words of Luke were void of sense and signification to the disciples, then and there. What should they do in remembrance of Jesus? He did not do or say anything on that occasion new or unusual among Jews. To pronounce the benediction, break the bread, and credence pieces thereof to the persons at table, was, and is now, a common usage of the Hebrews. There was nothing to be done specially in remembrance of Jesus. It could not possibly refer to the doctrine of transubstantiation, as Jesus was still alive among them, and so the bread and wine could not possibly have been changed to his flesh and blood. What idea did Luke mean to convey with those additional words?

It is important to know that those additional words are taken literally from Paul (1 Corinthians, xi. 20). He addressed that epistle to Gentile-Christians, or at least to a body composed of Gentiles and Jews, the former element preponderating, among whom the Essenean common meal, as adopted by the apostles, had been introduced to give them a proper substitute for the sacrificial meals of riotous heathens, whose debauchery and excesses at those public feasts are notorious. Jesus was the last sacrifice superseding all others—was the fundamental idea in this respect. Therefore the Christians could meet at a sacrificial meal without having slaughtered a victim. They met at stated times, each bringing his victuals along, and eating them as he or she pleased (without giving anything to their neighbors: verse 21). These meals were intended to be Jewish in form, viz., to pronounce the benediction over the bread before the meal, and over the wine after the meal, in order to accustom those late heathens to thank God for meat and drink, and thus to protect them against an excessive and riotous use of either. But Paul did nothing on his own account; he had learned everything of Jesus, whom he had never seen. He ap-

peared to Paul as a spirit, ghost, phantom, or so, and taught him the Gospel. Therefore Paul knew (verse 23) that Jesus, at his last supper, had commanded, as he before meal spoke the benediction, broke the bread and credenced pieces thereof to each of the party, so all his followers should do, at least at the public feasts: "Do this in remembrance of me." Furthermore, as Jesus after his last supper pronounced the benediction over the wine, and then credenced it to each of the party, "So ye shall do (as often as ye drink) in remembrance of me." He evidently intended to see this beautiful Jewish custom introduced among the Gentiles. Had he recommended it as a Jewish custom, the Gentiles would have thought slightly of it. Therefore, he said Jesus did the same thing at his last supper, and commands you to do it in remembrance of him. This gave weight and importance to the ceremony. Now Paul knew very well what he said, and to what particular purpose he did say so; but Luke copied his words in the wrong place, where they have neither sense nor signification. Jesus could not have commanded born Jews to do in remembrance of him what they and every other religious Jew did and do to this day.

The commentators of Luke felt that his additional words are without intelligible signification. Therefore they resorted to a passage in the Talmud,* maintaining, as they say, that the Jews, in eating the Passover, did it to represent the sufferings of the Messiah. Therefore Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me," being the Messiah. If so, Jesus ought to have given to his disciples pieces of the Passover lamb, which is supposed to represent the suffering of the Messiah, especially as it is stated plainly in Scriptures what the unleavened bread represents—viz., the memorial of Israel's departure from Egypt (Exodus, xiii. 8; Deut., xvi. 3). Aside of this, however, the passage of the Talmud says a different thing entirely. Nothing is said there of the Passover lamb; the subject under discussion is the great hymn, *Hallel Haggadol*, consisting of Psalm 136, or of Psalms 120 to 136, or of Ps. 135 to 136, or of 111 to 118. These are the three opinions in the Talmud. Next the various opinions

* Pesachim, 118 *a.*, and not 119, as Dr. Adam Clarke copies from Schaetgen.

about the contents of the great hymn are stated, one of which, dating evidently from the third or fourth century, when the Jews had suffered long in exile—one of which is, that the great hymn contains references to the exode, the dividing of the Red Sea, the promulgation of the Law, the resurrection of the dead, and the sufferings of the Messiah; but this last point is contradicted right there by quoting from two older authorities; and a third one maintaining, the fifth point in the great hymn is the reference to the rescue of the souls of the pious ones from Gehinom, in the passage, "I beseech thee, O Lord, release my soul. . . For thou hast delivered my soul from death. . . I will walk before the Lord in the lands of life" (Psalm cxvi). Therefore it was not a tradition or belief to which the one or the other of the parties referred: it is merely a piece of Babylonian exegese. But aside of this, there is no mention and no reference in the passage to the Passover lamb or to eating anything at any time, and the commentators of Luke had resort to a mistake.

Aside of all this, however, the mistake of Schaetgen and Adam Clark is also in this essential point, that they translate the terms חבלו של משיח in that passage of the Talmud, "the suffering of the Messiah," while actually they signify the sufferings of the Hebrew people before the coming of the Messiah, viz., in the generation which will see his coming. There is no idea of the Messiah's suffering connected with these terms. We prove this by the three oldest passages on record, in which these terms occur; viz., in the Mishnah (Sotah, ix. 15); Pesikta, of Rab Kahana (Edit. Lyck, p. 51); and Talmud Babli (Sanhedrin, 97 *a*). A cursory inspection of the last chapters of Sotah will show that they were written in the third century. This is especially visible in the Messianic passages under consideration, which in the other books are ascribed to Rabbi Johanan and Rabbi Bo, authorities of the third century. It appears, therefore, that the sufferings of the Jews in the second and third centuries had produced in them the idea that these sufferings would increase and demoralization reach all classes of society, until both should be intolerable, when the war of Gog-Magog should follow, and at last the Messiah should make his appearance and make an end to both. But there is no hint in either of these passages to the sufferings of

the Messiah himself. The rabbis, it appears, thought it was not very difficult to escape those sufferings, for one of them, Bar Kapra, maintained, "Whoever eats three meals on Sabbath will be saved from three evils, viz., from Gehinom, the war of Gog-Magog, and the sufferings in the time of the Messiah" (Sabbath, 118 *a*). Bar Kapra did not think very highly of the prophesied war and sufferings, as many others did who maintained, "The world will go on in its usual way."*

In one of the latest compilations of rabbinical traditions, called Midrash Samuel (chap. 19), from which it was carried over to another and still later compilation, Yalkut Shimoni (Isaiah, sec. 338), a Babylonian rabbi, Hunna, of the fifth century, speaks of the sufferings of the Messiah, in explanation of Isaiah, liii. 5, which, there is no doubt in our mind, was taken from the Gospels. The idea that a suffering Messiah had been imagined by the ancient Hebrews in the time of Jesus, or in the next centuries after his death, must be given up as being entirely without foundation in the literature of the ancient Hebrews.

It appears superfluous, however, to argue this point against Luke and Paul, as the older sources, Mark and Matthew, omit to state that Jesus commanded the observance of the eucharist; and John not only omits it, but places in its stead the washing of the disciples' feet, of which the Synoptics had no knowledge, and it could not possibly be forced into any part of their story of the last supper. We have here three witnesses against Paul. Therefore, we must reject Luke's additional words as being Paul's, and not the words of Jesus. The sacrament of the eucharist has no foundation in the Gospels; and if any words spoken at the last supper can be considered historical, they certainly are those recorded by Mark, "Take, eat, this is my body," the signification of which we discuss below.

Regarding the wine at the last supper, Mark says:

"And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."

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* See Babli Sabbath, 30 *b*., and parallel passages; the Derashoth of Rabbon Gamaliel, and the objections of a certain disciple—"There is nothing new under the sun."

Matthew changes the passage considerably. He adds a command of Jesus, "Drink ye all of it," which Jesus hardly did say, as the custom was and is now among Jews that all nip of the wine, over which the blessing was pronounced. Then Matthew adds the significant words, "For the remission of sins," while Mark shows no knowledge that Jesus thought his blood was shed for the remission of sins. Luke also follows Mark, and records as the words of Jesus, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Although these words make no sense whatever, as the cup can not possibly be made a new or old testament, nevertheless it is plain that Luke intended to reproduce the word of Mark, and to omit the addition of Matthew, which expresses the dogma of vicarious atonement adopted after the death of Jesus.

What does the "new testament" mean? Testament signifies a *last will*, to which the adjective *new* stands in no logical connection. It is a mistake in the Latin translation, adopted in the English; for the Greek terms must be rendered "the new covenant." Jesus gave them the wine to drink upon the new covenant to be made by his blood, shed for many as Mark says, for the disciples as Luke expounds. The nature of this new covenant is described more at length by John. Although this last evangelist denies the whole incident—the eating of the Paschal supper, and every thing connected with it—still his last speech of Jesus is a lengthy illustration of the words of the Synoptics, said to have been spoken at the last supper, to which John adds his share, to bring out the Logos, the Son of God, in his proper light on this occasion. John, from xiii. 31, to xvii. 26, is a commentary from his standpoint to the narrative of the Synoptics, contradicting almost all the alleged facts, and presenting the spirit thereof.

We ask John, What is the new covenant which Jesus made with his disciples? and he replies (xv. 9):

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do what-

soever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another."

Like a man parting forever from his friends; like a teacher bidding the last farewell to his disciples; like a martyr who lays down his life for his beloved friends, Jesus said, so John imagines, "My blood shed for you shall unite you forever in love." This is the new covenant which he established among his disciples. No thinking man can find more in the words of the Gospels. On that eve of the supper, Jesus announced to the apostles, not only his firm resolution to die for his disciples and friends, and to prevent the calamity which an insurrection in his favor was sure to bring on his people, but also that the end was nigh, and that the traitor would do his work quickly. He speaks like one who has taken poison, sees the approach of certain death, and bids his friends farewell. He breaks the bread, and the broken cake naturally reminds him of his body which would thus be broken in a short time, and says, "Take, eat, this is my body," or rather, it is like what my body will be in a short time. The wine naturally reminds him of his blood to be shed for his friends, and he proposes to them the new covenant of perpetual memory and love. All this is as natural as it possibly could have been said, had not some of the evangelists wrapped their peculiar doctrines around the incident. With Matthew plain martyrdom was insufficient, and he had to bring in remission of sins by the blood of Jesus. With Luke, again, the parting supper, as such, was not sublime enough: he must bring in Paul's statement, that Jesus commanded them to do this, God knows what, in remembrance of him. With John it was not respectable enough that the Logos, the Son of God, should speak the words of a mortal being going forth to meet his fate, and so he changes the whole phase of the affair, and replaces it by elaborate speeches, of which the Synoptics had no idea. Each had his dogma to represent, and his peculiar traditions to bring in and to justify. The plain fact is, that Jesus sacrificed himself to save his friends, which, in after-times,

was expounded into vicarious atonement, and imposed upon the Gospel story. Eating the last meal with his friends and disciples, he bade them farewell, and expressed the wish that his blood should unite them in love, which was construed into the mysteries of the eucharist. He spoke of his friends and disciples, and to them only, without the remotest reference to others, or to unborn generations; but the expounders changed it into a fabric of salvation for all the world, and, on their own responsibility, made it a condition *sine qua non* of eternal life and happiness. Simple facts were unskillfully wrought up into a divine drama, after the pattern of the Pagan mysteries, in defiance of the plain resultants of reason and the simple teachings of the Bible. Unravel the matter, and nothing is left except the resolution of a man—rather to die than let his friends rush madly into the abyss of certain destruction. The resolution was as magnanimous as the dogmas built upon it are childish, and in perpetual warfare with reason's plainest paragraphs.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAPTURE OF JESUS.

I. THE PREPARATION.

After the supper, Jesus and his disciples left the city to cross the Cedron. On the way, Mark and Matthew report, a conversation with the apostles took place, and especially with Peter, which Luke gives in another form and place, and John omits altogether. The main point of the conversation is, that Jesus prophesied Peter would deny him that very night, before the cock crow thrice, which Peter gainsaid emphatically. The four evangelists narrate, that Peter did deny his Master when danger threatened, and that Jesus prophesied it. We discuss the merits thereof below.

Luke was obliged to change his predecessors' report, because it is maintained therein, that Jesus said, "But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." Luke denies this (xxiv. 49), and maintains, neither Jesus nor the apostles returned to Galilee; he ascended to

heaven from Bethany, near Jerusalem, and commanded them to stay in the capital till they should have received the Holy Ghost. John also expounds from his standpoint the contents of this conversation in his last speech of Jesus, without admitting the fact, that such a conversation took place. Thus, according to Luke and John, this incident, as reported by Mark and Matthew, is no fact.

This mutual contradiction of the evangelists in their reports, increases as the story progresses. Next in the narrative, the passion scene comes, which the three Synoptics narrate, each in his own way. Matthew copied it of Mark, and Luke tells again an entirely different story. He brings an angel from heaven to embellish the scene, and adds that the sweat of Jesus was like drops of blood falling upon the ground. Who saw it? Who reported it? Jesus was alone, and the three disciples next to him slept, according to all accounts. If an angel appeared to Jesus in that trying moment, how is it that Mark and Matthew did not know the important item? There is but one answer to these queries: they intended to report one fact, and each embellished it according to the traditions of the church for which he wrote. They wished to report, when the decisive moment approached, Jesus exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death," and he prayed, "Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me, nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." It is so natural and human that the martyr, however firm his determination, the decisive moment approaching, feels the agony of that inevitable struggle between the love of life and the terror of death, that this report of the Synoptics can hardly be doubted.* Still, John denies it. It was too human, too natural for him, that the Logos, the Son of God, should dread the moment of death, knowing that this was his mission and destiny on earth. Therefore John has his own last prayer of Jesus (xvii. 1). Jesus prays to God. He should now glorify him, take him back to heaven, his work on earth being done. Then he prays for his disciples, and closes, "And I have declared unto them, and will declare it, that

* If we are to take Luke's notice of the two swords (xxii. 38) as a fact, and the disciples understood Jesus right, then he already repented the step he had taken, and thought of self-defense. It is quite natural that the mind in such a decisive moment wavers, before it arrives at the last and final resolution.

the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Not only the place of this last prayer is changed—John has it at the last supper, and the Synoptics outside of the city—but the contents are entirely different. With the Synoptics, the man and martyr, Jesus, in his agony prays in a moment of bitter affliction and the struggle of the soul against approaching death. With John the Logos, the Son of God, prays the Father to make now a speedy end of his career, and to glorify him at once. If John had so little confidence in the statement of his predecessors, it must not be expected of us, in the year 1874, to believe them implicitly.

II. THE PLACE OF CAPTURE.

The place where Jesus was arrested, was not known to the evangelists. Mark and Matthew state it was Gethsemane. This place, with its garden, is in the valley, a few steps beyond the Cedron, at the foot of Olivet. Turn over to Luke, and he tells you it was on the Mount of Olives, hence not at Gethsemane. He maintains it was the same place which Jesus frequented every night (xxi. 37). John must have observed this difference of statements, and attempting to follow both and none, he himself not knowing the place, says Jesus with his disciples went over the brook of Cedron, and entered a garden. This leaves it undecided whether that garden was in the valley or on the mountain, as he might have gone a mile or two beyond the Cedron, and entered any of the gardens in that direction.

III. THE CAPTORS.

The evangelists differ widely on the question, by whom or how Jesus was arrested, what was spoken, or what occurred on that occasion. Mark says (xiv. 43): "And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders." The words "one of the twelve," qualifying Judas, prove that this account was taken from a source different from the above. The one who wrote the above items, concerning Judas, would not have needed this explanatory phrase, as he must have expected the reader to know full well which Judas the traitor was. The great multitude, with swords and staves, could only have been a promiscuous crowd of civilians, a gang of

ruffians picked up in a hurry, and sent out on this errand; because soldiers, guardsmen, and constables or policemen were armed with swords, spears, bows and arrows, etc., and not merely with swords or staves. This promiscuous crowd of ruffians was sent by three distinct bodies—the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. A body of chief priests and a body of elders are known in the Jewish institutions, but a body of scribes did not exist. This renders the notice suspicious, as having been written by one not acquainted with the Hebrew institutions of that day. Therefore, while Matthew copied literally the above account from Mark, he changes the conclusion into "From the chief priests and elders of the people," omitting the scribes altogether. Matthew having thus amended the account, Luke omits altogether the authorities sending the multitude and the arms borne, and states (xxii. 47): "And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them." While the peculiar phrase, "one of the twelve," distinctly shows that Luke had the accounts of Mark and Matthew before him, the indefinite expression, "behold a multitude," no less distinctly shows that he did not wish to confirm who sent them or how they were armed. So Luke leaves it uncertain who arrested Jesus, and by what authority he was arrested. John, perceiving this confusion of accounts, gives his own version of it. He states (John, xviii. 3), Judas then having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. What they intended to do with lanterns and torches in a moonlight night, nobody has yet been able to explain. Fearing the people, as they did, it is not likely that they went forth with torches and lanterns to arrest Jesus. Besides, the Jews had no lanterns. There is no word for it in the Hebrew or the Palestine dialects. This merely shows that John's account is not taken from any Jewish source. He says Judas received men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, which means the priestly superiors, omitting scribes and elders. And the men and officers received, he says (so the original reads), were a squad of soldiers, and also some officers, constables, or guardsmen from the chief priests. The verse should be translated

thus; "Judas, then, having received a band of soldiers, and *also* officers from the chief priests," etc. This is a flat contradiction of Mark's and Matthew's statement. It was not a promiscuous crowd of civilians which arrested Jesus: soldiers and officers armed with "weapons" and not with "staves" did it. Who had soldiers under his command in Jerusalem? None but the Roman authorities. The people were disarmed. The invader held the military power and the right over life and death. If we take for granted that John adds the officers of the high-priest, to account in part for the statement of the Synoptics—for nobody can see what purpose those officers served if Judas had been given a squad of soldiers—we are informed by him that Judas led a squad of Roman soldiers to the spot to arrest Jesus. The fact that Mark took this account from some unknown source, that Matthew amended it, and Luke doubted it in the main, makes it worthless. We must then maintain either John has the correct account of the affair—viz., that a squad of Roman soldiers, led by Judas, arrested Jesus—or we must admit that neither of the four evangelists knew who arrested him. We prefer John's statement to absolute uncertainty, because it is most likely, fits best into the entire situation, and John might have drawn it from Roman accounts.

IV. JUDAS AND THE KISS.

How was Jesus arrested? Mark narrates: "And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him and lead him away safely. And as soon as he was come, he goes straightway to him and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him. And they laid their hands on him and took him." This kiss is the most satanic and unnatural that could possibly be invented. The traitor kisses his victim, and the victim is his teacher, friend, and master, against whom he manifests no animosity, grudge, or even disrespect on any previous occasion. Read this in any other book and you will instantly doubt it, as being too unnatural. So maliciously and hypocritically wicked man can not be. Besides, there was no earthly cause for that kiss. Judas might just as well have pointed out his victim to the soldiers by words or motions as by a kiss. Still, here is the statement of Mark, that the kiss was the

traitor's token, and the treacherous kiss was given. What right have we to gainsay an alleged fact by psychological speculation? But let us see what the other evangelists report. Matthew copied the account of Mark with one change and one addition. Judas said, "Master, Master," says Mark; he said, "Hail, Master," says Matthew, which is no Hebrew salutation. "Peace unto thee," is the Hebrew; hence, these words are Matthew's, and not Judas's. Jesus said nothing to Judas according to Mark, but according to Matthew he said, "Friend [companion], wherefore art thou come?" So Matthew took the liberty of amending Mark's account. Luke has another version of the affair. Judas "drew near unto Jesus to kiss him," without speaking a word. But Jesus knowing his intention said to him, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Luke does not maintain, that Judas kissed the Master, and has him say something entirely new. These are the doubtful points in the account. Did Judas kiss Jesus or did he not? If he did, why does Luke not state it? Again, what did Judas say to Jesus, or Jesus to Judas, as each of the Synoptics has other words for them? This uncertainty caused John to give a version of the affair entirely new. He says Judas did neither hail nor kiss the Master, did neither point him out to the soldiers nor even approach him. "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he; and Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them." (John xviii. 4, 5). So it is not merely psychological speculation which contradicts the traitor's kiss: it is John's plain statement to that effect. Here again, the same case as above, Matthew amends Mark, Luke doubts, and John contradicts. We must either adopt John's version as a fact, or admit that neither of them knew the story. It appears, however, that John had a correct idea of the affair. He continues: "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore you seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none."

The scene is dramatical. The going backward and falling to the ground, of course, is mere embellishment. But the object of John is to state two points: that Jesus voluntarily gave himself up to the soldiers, in order to save his disciples; and that he did not permit Judas to complete his treachery, in order to be enabled to say, "I have lost none." Both points fit exactly into the situation. He sacrificed himself to save his disciples, and could not have considered Judas as base a traitor as the evangelists did, since he was only instrumental in carrying out the project and resolution of Jesus, from motives which may have been patriotic.

V. THE SERVANT'S EAR.

The next point in the story is the ear of the high-priest's servant. For according to the testimony of all four evangelists, one of the companions of Jesus (John says it was Peter) drew the sword in defense of the Master, and cut off the ear of the high-priest's servant, whose name was Malchus. The story looks very unlikely; for if Peter or another man had offered resistance to a band of armed soldiers and officers, they naturally must have retaliated or at least arrested the perpetrator. It is difficult to imagine that he should have escaped unpunished. How do the evangelists get over this point? Mark says, Jesus offered an excuse: "Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled." We do not know what particular passage of Scriptures was to be fulfilled, either by this particular mode of arrest, or by the chopped-off ear of the high-priest's servant, and to this latter event it must have particular reference; still, Mark suggests, that these words of Jesus and his reference to Scriptures sufficed to quiet the promiscuous mob, not to retaliate instantly or at least to arrest the refractory man. Matthew is not satisfied with Mark's explanation, and adds another little speech of Jesus. He said to the man with the sword, "Put up again thy sword in his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword (Genesis, ix. 6). Thinkest thou that I can not now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

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After this additional speech, Matthew quotes Mark's observations on the subject. In the opinion of Matthew, Jesus quelled a rebellion which threatened to break out on the spot, by the armed and serious resistance of the disciples, admonishing them to desist, and accusing the soldiers and officers of imprudence in having come against him, as though they were to arrest a thief, and thus challenge armed resistance. This conduct of Jesus saved the rash man. The soldiers and officers may have had strict orders not to excite an insurrection, and may have been glad to come off so easily. It is quite likely that they were under such orders, since the insurrection was dreaded by the high-priest and his subordinates, and Jesus was arrested to prevent that emergency. Luke, however, is not satisfied with this rational explanation. He brings in a miracle. Jesus only said, "Suffer ye thus far;" then he touched the ear and healed the man at once. This miracle, Luke must have imagined, so astonished the armed multitude that they abstained from retaliation. Unfortunately no other evangelist mentions this important item, which they must have done had they known of it; and furthermore, had such an extraordinary miracle been wrought in presence of that multitude, they would have fled in dismay and terror, as it must certainly have convinced them of the supernatural powers of Jesus. Besides, it is evident that Luke was guided in this point by traditions entirely unknown to the other evangelists; for the same little speech which, according to Mark and Matthew, Jesus addressed to the armed band, Luke says he addressed to the chief priests and captains of the temple, and the elders "which were come to him," evidently presenting the absurdity that all those dignitaries had turned out at midnight to arrest Jesus, as though they could not muster a band of men to do it for them. John, with this double version of the story before him, decides in favor of Matthew. He narrates: "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Jesus quelled the insurrection, ripe to break out on the spot, and this saved the man's life who had drawn the sword. That man was not Peter, and the wounded man was not the high-priest's servant, or else Peter would have been arrested in the high-priest's palace, whither he

followed Jesus, and where no insurrection could break out. Peter being afterward the head of the Jewish Christians was put in front of insurrectionary disciples of Jesus, who did not understand his mission, in the opinion of John. Malchus may have been a notorious anti-christian man in aftertimes, therefore John placed him in this connection. John could not know names unknown to the Synoptics.

VI. THE ARREST.

Having peremptorily stopped armed resistance, all the disciples and friends forsook Jesus and fled, Mark and Matthew maintain, and in such hot haste that a certain young man who followed Jesus with a linen cloth cast about his naked body, being caught by one of the armed men, left the linen cloth in his hands and fled naked; so Mark narrates. Peter only, and John says also one disciple, John, followed at a distance, when Jesus was led to the city by the band of soldiers. John only says Jesus was bound; the Synoptics know nothing of it, nor is it likely that he was bound.

So the desperate step was taken, the insurrection was frustrated, the lives of the disciples and friends and probably of thousands more were saved, a threatening calamity was averted from the head of the nation. Jesus not being able to surrender himself to the authorities on account of his disciples' zeal and love, had suggested to Judas Iscariot the speedy accomplishment of his treachery, and succeeded well in this point. But who will describe the disappointment, the mortification, the bitter feelings of the man who, so zealously and enthusiastically, so cheerfully and hopefully, had embraced a cause, and now, by the force of uncontrollable circumstances, is compelled to lay down his life for his friends and disciples, without having accomplished his object and without hope that it ever would be accomplished. Again, who will describe the sublime though melancholy satisfaction of the man with the consciousness—I die for my own, I die for my friends, I die that they may live. The feelings in such a situation can only be imagined, never perfectly felt or expressed by one who never was in that situation; and imagination is the mere shadow of reality. It is not the hero's death on the field of battle, when the passions are excited to the point of forgetting the agony of dissolution;

victory is expected and not death. It is much more. It is the quiet martyr's calm and magnanimous resolution, premeditated after a long struggle and bitter disappointment. It is the great determination that life is not the highest good of man; that there are duties holier and godlier than the duty of self-preservation: love and affections stronger than man's love of earthly existence.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRIAL.

I. TWO HIGH-PRIESTS.

The Synoptics narrate, Jesus was led directly into the high-priest's or Caiaphas's palace. John, however, adds (xviii. 13), he was brought first to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who sent him bound to the latter (*ibid.* 24). The cause of John's deviation from the statement of the Synoptics can easily be discovered. There was another tradition current among the early Christians, that Annas was the high-priest, when Jesus was crucified, as is evident from the Acts (iv. 6). There was no Annas high-priest up to 48 A. C. (Joseph. Ant., xx., v. 2), and Luke, who keeps the disciples in Jerusalem after the death of Jesus, and builds up a congregation at once, certainly thought that the arrest of Peter and John took place shortly after the crucifixion, when Annas still was high-priest. In order to account for both traditions, John gives also to Annas a place in the story; although contrary to that tradition he maintains expressly, "And Caiaphas was high-priest that year," being under the impression that the office was for one year only, which might account for the mistake. But Caiaphas was high-priest for many years, and remained in office till Pilate was removed. The evangelists did not settle finally this doubtful point, for the Gospel writers after them, especially those whose productions are known as the Gospel of Nicodemus and the Story of Joseph of Arimathea, were still in doubt about it, and invariably place Annas before Caiaphas, without deciding who was high-priest, leaving the reader to believe, however, Annas occupied this dig-

nity, and therefore he is named first. It is unimportant whether Jesus was led first to Annas and then to Caiaphas, or at once to the latter, or who was high-priest at the time; but it is important to know that the early Christians, prior to the evangelical writers, differed on the subject, whether Caiaphas or Annas was high-priest when Jesus was crucified, because it proves that the sources, from which this part of the Gospel story was taken, were very uncertain.

II. THE PLACE.

The next point of disagreement in the Gospel accounts is the precise locality where, in the high-priest's palace, Jesus was retained till morning. Here we have two different accounts which John again harmonizes to the best of his abilities. Mark (xiv. 53) maintains, when Jesus arrived in the high-priest's palace, ALL THE PRIESTS, scribes, and elders met there; Matthew says they had met there before. Next he tells us that Peter followed Jesus at a distance, right into the palace, where he took his seat among the servants about the fire. Meanwhile a long and tedious trial of Jesus took place before those authorities, which resulted in his condemnation and personal maltreatment. Then Mark tells the story of Peter denying his Master; and finally (xv. 1) he communicates, that in the morning the chief priests, elders, and scribes, as also the whole council, resolved to send Jesus bound to Pilate. The conspicuous errors in Mark's account are, first, that ALL THE PRIESTS were assembled in the palace, of whom there could not have been less than two hundred thousand of the age between 20 and 50, showing the writer's ignorance in this point; and second, at the end of this scene, Mark brings in the high-priest, with the elders and scribes as a separate body, and the council as another. The elders being counted in the first body, of what was the second composed? Matthew observes the same order of the story precisely as Mark, only that he corrects the errors just noticed, and states (xxvi. 57), that the scribes and elders had met in the palace, omitting "all the priests;" and he concludes the scene (xxvii. 1) that the chief priests and the elders sent Jesus bound to Pilate, omitting Mark's "scribes and all the council." This leaves no doubt that Matthew copied Mark's account and improved it in these and some other particulars, *i. e.*, he adopted it on the au-

thority of Mark, and amended it on his own. According to Mark's narrative Jesus must have been in one of the rooms in the palace, as the trial could not have come off in the yard, where the soldiers and servants were seated around the fire. We turn over to Luke, and there is an entirely different account of the affair. He narrates, that Jesus was led to the palace of the high-priest, Peter following at a distance (xxii. 54). A fire was built, around which the whole crowd was seated "in the midst of the yard" or court—not in the hall, as the translators have it—and Jesus was sitting among them at the fire (*ibid.* 61) until morning (*ibid.* 66). No priests, scribes, elders, or council appears, or meets in the palace, and no trial takes place. "As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes came together, and led him into their council" (*ibid.*). According to Mark, Jesus spent his night before the council in a trial, hence in a room or hall; while according to Luke, no council meets and no trial takes place in the night, and Jesus remains with his captors near the fire in the yard. With these two conflicting accounts before him, John narrates the affair in a manner undecided and uncertain. He says (xviii. 18): "And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold (in harvest-time???): and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them and warmed himself. The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine." The formal trial being left out and the informal questions of the high-priest substituted, Jesus may have remained in the yard near the fire, as Luke narrates, and still there was some sort of an inquiry, if no trial, to pay some respect at least to Mark's account. But Luke denies altogether that Jesus conversed with or even saw the high-priest any more. It is evident, however, that only one account can be correct, either Mark's or Luke's. Either a trial took place during the night, and Jesus was in the hall, or no trial took place in the night, and Jesus remained in the yard, near the fire, among his captors. This is important to know; but we must first allude to two other points before we can decide.

III. PETER DENYING THE MASTER.

If the evangelists had written history from reliable sources, one point in this narrative they ought to have known fully and correctly, namely, Peter denying the

Master, which Peter himself must have communicated with all the details thereof. But here again the conflicting accounts are most remarkable. Mark (xi., xiv. 66) maintains "one of the maids of the high-priest" said to Peter, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth," which he denied, went out into the porch, "and the cock crew." Then another maid sees him and says, "This is one of them," which he again denies. Then some of the men renew the accusation. "But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon he wept." Here we have two maids and finally some men addressing Peter. After the first query Peter withdraws from the yard to the porch, the cock crows twice, and Peter thinks of the words of Jesus without any further sign or signal. All this occurred after the trial and condemnation of Jesus, and after he had been maltreated. Matthew copies Mark's account literally, with one exception, that he knew of the cock crowing but once, because, according to his traditions, Jesus did not say, "Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice." He said, "Before the cock crow [finish crowing] thou shalt deny me thrice." So Matthew changes this feature of the story, because he had another version of the prophecy. This suggests at once that the story was written, not because it happened, but simply because a certain saying of Jesus was traditionally preserved, only that the exact words were not known. Luke corrects Mark's account; there are three questioners (the second person is no maid), three answers; but the cock crows but once, Peter does not leave the yard, goes not unto the porch, nor would he have thought of the prophecy if it had not been for one point, of which all the other evangelists were ignorant: "And the Lord (Jesus) turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the words of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." All this is done before Jesus was subjected to any trial or maltreatment, so that Peter could not have known anything about it. John says (xviii. 25) the story happened after the high-priest had interrogated Jesus and somebody had struck him (John needs Peter's testimony); and the story was not as the Synopties have it; it was so:

"And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high-priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again; and immediately the cock crew."

Peter was not asked thrice but by entirely different persons and the cock crowed but once. He did not go out, and did not weep. In this case Mark has his own way, Matthew and Luke each theirs, and John is independent of either, so that it is plain it was not the story which they knew: it was the supposed prophecy of Jesus which gave rise to the story. This is not history written from authentic sources.

IV. THE MALTREATMENT IN THE HIGH-PRIEST'S PALACE.

Precisely the same is the case with the maltreatment to which Jesus was subjected. Mark communicates (xiv. 65), after Jesus had been condemned by the nocturnal council, "And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy; and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands." The "some" of whom Mark thinks they have committed those outrages, must have been members of the council; so that all on a sudden all the chief priests, elders, and scribes, the whole council, without regard to their dignity, the solemnity of the occasion, the express laws of their people, and the helplessness of the convict, behaved like an excited mob, a band of lawless and heartless ruffians. This is hardly credible. Still Matthew (xxiv. 67) adopts this account and adds to it, according to the Latin version, "And some struck him with their fists." This appeared incredible even to Luke. He says (xxii. 63): "And the men that held Jesus [the soldiers and officers] mocked him and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy—who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him." This looks somewhat more probable, as rude warriors and hirelings might thus outrage the law and humanity. Cases of this kind transpire in our age of enlightenment. But Luke betrays his sources by the phrases "they struck him in the face," etc., "saying, Prophesy," showing distinctly that he has taken his version

of the story from Mark's account, and having no nightly trial, as Mark has, he transferred the scene from the hall of judgment to the yard or court, and changed the actors from the men of the council to the soldiers and hirelings holding Jesus. Here again John had two conflicting accounts to adjust. He denies that either the men of the council or the soldiers and officers struck or mocked Jesus; and to give some satisfaction to Mark's account, he reduces the whole outrage to one blow. Having adopted the high-priest's informal inquiry in place of Mark's nightly trial, he winds up thus (xviii. 22): "And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so?" This reduces the whole scandal to one officer and one blow, and this looks like being taken from the trial of Paul at Jerusalem. (Acts, xxiii. 2.) It is impossible, to any fair critic, to discover fact under these contradictory statements of improbabilities. Either Mark, Luke, or John, or all three of them, stated a falsehood; the latter appears most likely, for neither Mark's nightly trial, nor Luke's morning trial, nor John's informal conversation, is based upon fact.

V. THE NIGHTLY TRIAL.

We have arrived now at the main point—the nightly trial which Mark reports and Matthew adopts. This trial, denied by Luke and John, rests upon the exclusive authority of Mark, confirmed by Matthew. The first question naturally must be, Is Mark better authority than Luke and John? We think Luke and John were so much nearer to the time of Mark than we are, that their mere denial should suffice all critical minds to reject the nightly trial of Mark as a piece of fiction, especially as we have seen in the former points that he writes no authentic history. Still, in order to establish the point positively, we will investigate it separately.

The whole trial, from the beginning to the end, is contrary to Jewish law and custom as in force at the time of Jesus. No court of justice with jurisdiction in penal cases could or ever did hold its session in the place of the high-priest. There were three legal bodies in Jerusalem* to decide penal cases: the Great Sanhedrin of seven-

* Besides police court whose judges were called *Dayanai Guezeroth*, having jurisdiction merely in cases of violation of ordinances.

ty-one members, and two Minor Sanhedrin each of twenty-three members. The court of priests בית דין של כהונה had no penal jurisdiction except in the affairs of the temple service, and then over priests and Levites only. The Great Sanhedrin held its sessions in a hall called *Lishhath Haggazith*—"the hall of hewn stone"—adjoining the temple near the altar of copper. There and there only their sessions were legal in all causes of life and death.* But this body did positively not exist at the time when Jesus was crucified, having been dissolved 30 A. C. In nowise then any passages of the gospels must be understood to refer to the Great Sanhedrin. Again, the two Minor Sanhedrin had their legal places of sessions—one at the gate of the temple inclosure (פסח הר הבית), and the other at the gate of the temple court (פסח העזרה). There and nowhere else their sessions were lawful and their judgments legal.† Another court having penal jurisdiction did not exist in Jerusalem, nor were any other places assigned to them. Therefore Luke states (xxii. 66), "they led him into their council," knowing that no such court could hold sessions in the place of the high-priest. Still Mark maintains, the nightly trial took place in the palace of the high-priest.

No court of justice in Israel was permitted to open its sessions at night, and in cases of capital crime no session could be extended after the evening hour. (Mishnah Sanhedrin, iv. 1.) The legally-appointed time for the sessions of the Minor Sanhedrin and lower courts was from 6 A. M. to 12 M., and for the Great Sanhedrin from 6. A. M. to 3 P. M.‡ Therefore Luke maintains, the session of the court took place "as soon as it was day." Still Mark maintains, contrary to law and custom, the trial came off at night.

No court of justice in Israel was permitted to hold sessions on Sabbath or any of the seven Biblical holidays. In cases of capital crime, no trial could be commenced on Friday or the day previous to any holiday, because it was not lawful either to adjourn such cases longer than over

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* Mishnah Sanhedrin, iii.; Talmud do., 88 *b*; Maimonides, Hilch. Sanhedrin, iii. 1.

† Mishnah Sanhedrin, ii. 2; Talmud do., 88 *b*; Maimonides, Mamrim, i. 4.

‡ Talmud Sabbath, 10; Sanhedrin, 88 *b*; Maimonides, *ibid.* iii. 1.

night, or to continue them on the Sabbath or holiday.* Hence not only the feast of Passover, but also the Friday, is in the way of Mark's nightly trial. John gains nothing by his date; for the night between the 13th of 14th day of Nissan, according to Jewish computation of time, counts to the 14th day, on which no trial of capital crime could be opened. Therefore John has no formal trial whatever before any Jewish authorities. Still Mark has it in the night of the Passover feast.

No criminal court among the ancient Hebrews tried any case without the co-operation of two scribes to record the proceedings. It was prohibited to write on Sabbath and holidays; still the Synoptics have the trial of Jesus take place on the Passah feast. According to Jewish law, a man whose life is jeopardized must have a trial lasting at least two days—the first for the prosecution and the second for the defense;† but with Mark and Matthew, the whole thing is done in a few hours, and with Luke in an early morning hour. In fact, every step in the trials described by the Synoptics, as we shall notice all along, was contrary to Jewish law and custom.

If the trial of Jesus, as reported by the Synoptics, in every detail violates Jewish law and custom, then it must be assumed that Caiaphas and his conspirators acted contrary to the laws of Israel, because either they were afraid of the people, and wished to dispose of Jesus before the community could have been informed of his arrest, or because his destruction was preconcerted, and the whole procedure was a mere sham. In the first case, we must naturally expect strict secrecy; and in the second case, it is difficult to tell why any trial at all, genuine or sham, should have taken place. Having preconcerted, in violation of Jewish law, the destruction of Jesus, and the victim being in their hands, any and every form of law was superfluous. Therefore we must suppose that Caiaphas and his conspirators were not only villains but also fools who spent a whole night in going through a piece of mockery without attaining any end whatsoever. The idea of a sham trial must be abandoned. The Synoptics could never have entertained it, as we shall see instantly; but

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* Mishnah Sanhedrin, iv. 1; Talmud do., 32 to 34; Maimonides, *ibid.* iii. 3.

† Maimonides; Sanhedrin, xii. 3.

we will first discuss the point of secrecy. According to Luke, the trial was in the morning and in the regular judgment hall, hence there was no secrecy about it. According to Mark, the judges, in person or by messengers, stirred up a large number of witnesses to testify against Jesus. They must certainly have spoken to many before they succeeded in finding so considerable a number of witnesses. The judges themselves alarming the citizens at midnight, they could not expect secrecy. It rather appears that Mark did not think of any secrecy. He must have felt the weight of the question, If the trial was strictly secret among those conspirators, how could Mark or any body besides the conspirators know what was done and what was spoken? He reports not only alleged facts but also the very words spoken on that occasion. Therefore it was necessary to bring in some honest outsiders, in the capacity of witnesses, to render plausible the origin of the report; and bringing in honest outsiders, the idea of secrecy is dispelled.

As unlikely as it appears that a body of conspirators should alarm the community at midnight, going about in search of witnesses, still in the case of Mark it proves that he had no idea of a sham trial. In his ignorance of Jewish law, he imagined the trial which he described was lawful among Jews. He proves this, in the first place, by the very statement that witnesses were sought and produced. A court convoked and acting in rebellion to law and custom can be considered only a band of rebels. What use have such men of witnesses? Being lawless from the beginning, no legal restraint makes the presence of witnesses necessary. In the second place, Mark tells us, not only was the testimony of some witnesses considered insufficient to condemn Jesus (verse 56), and rejected on that ground, but also the testimony of false witnesses was rejected, so that Jesus was not condemned on the testimony of any witness, all being rejected as insufficient. Those judges must have been foolish. They went about at midnight in a populous city to produce false witnesses, as Matthew asserts, and when they had them they proved worthless. Why did they not instruct the witnesses what they must say and how they must say it? Had Mark intended to convey the idea of a sham trial, he could not possibly have supposed the judges to have been so scrupulously exact with the testimony. He certainly

thought of an honest, lawful trial, in the legal form; an honest and legal examination of witnesses, a fair consideration of the testimony, and after mature reflection the rejection thereof on account of insufficiency. If those judges had lived in our days, in New York, London, Paris, or elsewhere, they would certainly have been more successful in the discovery of a number of false witnesses, especially if the high dignitaries of any country should seek them. The citizens of Jerusalem, it appears, according to Mark and Matthew, were honest men.

VI. THE TIME OF THE TRIAL.

Not only the law and custom of the Hebrews, as stated above, and the contradictions of Luke and John, prove the fictitious character of Mark's nightly trial; but also the space of time which it is supposed to have occupied, testifies against it. The eating of the Passover meal could not have commenced before 6 to 7 P. M. Say with all the speeches, conversations, hymns and ceremonies, it lasted only three hours (with John's speeches and prayer it must have lasted till midnight); no less time can be allotted to it; then Jesus left the house between 9 and 10 P. M. Walking from the city out to Gethsemane takes one hour at least, so he arrived there between 10 and 11 P. M. Now comes the passion scene, the prayers, the returning three times to the disciples, which must have lasted another hour. This fixes the capture of Jesus between 11 and 12. The conversations at the capture and walking to the high-priest's palace must have taken up time to about 1 A. M. Another hour at least must have been occupied by the judges in their search after witnesses, so that the trial could not have commenced before 2 A. M. "Early in the morning," as Mark says, or at daybreak, according to Matthew; hence before 6 A. M. the trial was all over, so that all had to be done in four hours, which, according to Jewish law, is impossible.

According to Jewish law, it is every body's duty, in criminal cases, to testify before court, also if he is not summoned. Two witnesses who have seen the crime committed, each of them having seen the entire deed, their testimony concurring in the main and the leading particulars, establish the fact to convict the criminal. Direct and full testimony only is valid in cases of capital

crimes. Circumstantial evidence is insufficient. If for instance one has seen a man lying in wait, another has seen him load a pistol, a third has heard the noise of a shot coming from that tree where the man laid in wait, and a fourth sees the victim shot dead; their testimony would not convict the murderer to subject him to the sentence of death. Each witness must have seen the whole deed. Therefore the examination and cross-examination of the witnesses was very strict and lengthy. In all criminal cases each witness was examined by himself on the principle expressed in Deuteronomy, xiii. 15, "Then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently."* He was first asked questions to ascertain that he was a lawful witness in the case on trial, viz., concerning the person of the witness, his name, character, place of residence, etc., and then concerning the culprit, that he could identify him, was no enemy, and no relative of his, etc. Next came the admonition addressed to the witness† that he state nothing which he only heard others say; that he should be closely examined and cross-examined; that the blood of the culprit, if unjustly condemned, falls upon the false witness; that God created only one man, therefore whoever causes the death of one innocent man, has committed a crime as monstrous as though he had destroyed a whole world.‡ After this the seven main questions concerning the crime were asked, six concerning the time, and one the place, when and where the crime was committed, and particular questions relating to the nature of that particular crime. These questions being answered and written down by a scribe of the court, circumstantial questions were asked, answered, and committed to writing.§ Next came the cross-examination.‖ The twenty-three members of the court being the judges, jury and lawyers in one body, every one of them was entitled to cross-examine the witness.

The first witness being so examined, he was dismissed and one or more witnesses were heard, each by himself

* Mishnah, Sanhedrin, iv. 1.

† Mishnah, Sanhedrin, iv. 3 Talmud do., 37 *a*.

‡ Z. Frankel, Der Gerichtliche Beweis nach mosaish-talmudischem Rechte. p. 191.

§ Mishnah, Sanhedrin, iv. 2.

‖ Tal. do., 32 *b*. כסיען את העדים כשקוכ לכקוכ כדי שחטרף דעתן ויחזרו בהן

and precisely in the same manner. The concurrence of their testimony in the main points established the fact. The least deviation in time, place, or the crime itself, rendered the testimony null and void, and might have exposed the witnesses to the punishment of the law.* (Deut., xix. 16.)

It is evident that the examination of but one set of witnesses took longer than four hours. But Mark and Matthew report *many* false witnesses to have appeared against Jesus, whose testimony was taken and rejected as insufficient; and after them another set of witnesses appears who testified, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." Also this set of witnesses was examined and their testimony rejected because their "witness did not agree together." It is simply impossible to dispose legally of so many witnesses in four hours or in one day. They must have occupied the attention of a court acting under the above laws for two or three days.

It is in vain to put in here the plea, these conspirators made short work also of the witnesses. If they were all villains, they stood now before some honest men, viz., the witnesses who would not make any false statement. Is it at all imaginable that the high-priest, together with the highest dignitaries of a country, and the most celebrated temple in the world, let them be the worst of villains, will recklessly and shamelessly rebel against the law of the nation, in presence of honest citizens and in a case of a man's life being in jeopardy? The most licentious hypocrites even, under these circumstances, must have respected the form of law at least. Mark never supposes otherwise. But then, it was impossible to dispose of the case in four hours or in one day.

VII. FALSE WITNESSES.

Aside of all these points, Mark forgot the Jewish law concerning false witnesses, which the Pentateuch enjoins (Deuter., xix. 16), both Pharisees and Sadducees rigidly enforced, the various statutes and discussions thereon forming a very extensive portion of the Talmud. The law is explicit on this point: "And the judges shall inquire

* Maimonides, Hil. Eduth i., ii., iii., iv.

diligently; and behold, if the witness be a false witness, he has testified a falsehood against his brother; then shall ye do unto him as he had purposed to do unto his brother; and thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee." Maimonides in his Mishnah Thorah (*Hilch Eduth*, xvii.) has codified the laws concerning false witnesses, and shows how rigidly this part of the laws was enforced. In their opposition to capital punishment, the Pharisees surrounded the procedure and evidence with so many technical complications that it was very difficult to impose this highest penalty of the law upon any culprit. One of their means to this end was, they insisted, if the culprit had not been forewarned of the magnitude of the crime and its consequences before its commission (התראה), capital punishment could not be inflicted on him. But the false witnesses accusing one of a capital crime, were excluded from this benefit. Therefore it could not have been an easy task in Jerusalem to find false witnesses to testify in a case of capital crime, as every person almost must have known the inevitable consequences of that crime. If the judges, in the case of Jesus, actually succeeded in producing false witnesses, what was done with them after their crime had become obvious? The court had not the shadow of a right to dismiss them, of which Matthew, it appears, knew nothing. It must not be advanced that a court which seeks false witnesses to condemn a man will not hold them responsible for their crimes; for Mark evidently had the intention to report lawful proceedings, only that he did not know the laws of the Jews in the time of Jesus. Besides, if the judges as far as they were concerned had even assured the false witnesses that they should go unpunished, they still risked their lives, as any other person present might at any time thereafter have called them to account for the crime committed.

VIII. SELF-ACCUSATION.

The conduct of the high-priest, as described by Mark, was no less illegal than the whole trial. First, he asked Jesus, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" The high-priest must have known that the law does not require the culprit to say anything, unless he chooses to defend himself. There was no reason for Jesus to do this, if the witnesses did not

agree, and the question of the high-priest is a piece of folly. But Mark did not know it. He evidently believed the high-priest wanted to elicit a self-criminating confession of Jesus; for he goes on to report, when Jesus made no reply to the above queries, the high-priest asked him, "Art thou the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus answering in the affirmative, the high-priest renting his clothes (which again was forbidden on Sabbath and holidays) said, "What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy"—evidently supposing, as also the judges are supposed to have done, the confession of Jesus was sufficiently self-criminating to condemn him. This is an impardonable blunder. Self-accusation condemns none in Jewish law. "No man incriminates himself"* was the legal maxim. The Jewish procedure begins with the accusation (the inquisition is Roman), who had to produce the *corpus delicti*. Then followed the testimony of no less than two witnesses. Without either no sentence of capital punishment could be rendered. Self-accusation in cases of capital crime was worthless. For if not guilty he accuses himself of a falsehood; if guilty, he is a wicked man, and no wicked man, according to Jewish law, is permitted to testify, especially not in penal cases. The high-priest must have known all that, but Mark did not, and produces the high-priest in the role of a grand inquisitor.

IX. BLASPHEMY.

The point at issue, according to Mark, was blasphemy. Jesus admitting that he was the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed, no further testimony was considered necessary: the verdict of guilty and the sentence of death were at once and unanimously pronounced by all the judges. The mistakes in this point are numerous and obvious. In the first place, the law requires, in cases of capital crime, that the argu ment be opened by the defense, "from the side," *i. e.*, by the least influential member of the court, to be followed up to the most influential, till all who wish to defend the culprit have spoken. Then the prosecution follows. If none of the judges defend the culprit, *i. e.*, all pronounce him guilty, having no defender in the court, the verdict of guilty was invalid and the sentence of

* Sanhedrin 9 *b*, Kethubath 11 Yehamoth 24, and elsewhere.

death could not be executed.* But according to Mark all the judges agreed and condemned Jesus, none defended him. This is probably the worst blunder made by Mark. For if it was a mere sham trial, a sham defense must have been made to satisfy the law.

Again, had Jesus maintained before a body of Jewish lawyers to be the Son of God, they could not have found him guilty of blasphemy, because every Israelite had a perfect right to call himself a son of God, the law (Deut., xiv. 1) stating in unmistakable words, "Ye are sons of the Lord your God." When Rabbi Judah advanced the opinion, "If ye conduct yourselves like sons of God, ye are; if not, not," there was Rabbi Mair on hand to contradict him: "In this or in that case, ye are the sons of the Lord your God."† No law, no precedent, and no fictitious case in the Bible or the rabbinical literature can be cited to make of this expression a case of blasphemy.

Had Jesus maintained before a Jewish court to be the Son of God, in the trinitarian sense of the terms, viz., that he was part, person, or incarnation of the Deity, he must have said it in terms to be understood to that effect, as ambiguous words amount to nothing. But if even clearly understood, the court could only have found him insane, but not guilty of any crime. John could write for Gentile readers, that Jesus said of himself, "I am the path, the truth, and the life;" "If ye have learned to know me, ye have also learned to know my Father;" "Whoever seeth me, seeth the Father" (John, xiv.), because the heathens had never risen above pantheism and anthropomorphism. With them the universe was Deity *in concreto*, and the Deity was the universe *in abstracto*, manifesting and accommodating himself to the human senses by incarnation, the most perfect of which was the human shape. With them the Father could be seen and known by seeing and knowing the incarnation called Son. Had anybody uttered the same ideas in Jerusalem, nobody would have considered him guilty of blasphemy; every sensible Jew would have taken him to be insane. But Jesus is not reported to have said anything of the kind in

* Maimonides, Sanhedrin, ix. 1 and xi. 7, and sources noticed there.

† Siphri Re'eh, 96.

the trial under consideration, and if he had said so, no case of blasphemy could have been made of it.

Mark reports furthermore, that Jesus did not simply affirm the high-priest's question, but added: "And ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Jesus can not have said these words. Our reasons are, they are not true; none of the judges and witnesses present ever did see him either sitting on the right hand of power or coming in the clouds of heaven. These words could have originated only after the death of Jesus, when the Jewish Christians expected his immediate return as the Messiah and restorer of the kingdom of heaven, so that those very men could see him coming in the clouds of heaven. Besides, Jesus, the Pharisean Jew, could not have entertained the anthropomorphism that God had a right hand. Again, this passage alludes to a supposed prophecy of Daniel (vii. 13): "I looked on the nightly visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven came one like a son of man" (like a human being). This "son of man," according to Saadiah, refers to the Messiah to come hereafter; according to Ibn Ezra, it refers to the people of Israel; according to Mark, it refers to Jesus. Either of the three opinions is a mere guess. It appears entirely different to us. We think, after Daniel had predicted the end of all crowns, thrones, sceptres, despots and rulers in general, he declares that then man will regain his rights and his dominion given him by the Almighty. "This dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom is one which shall never be destroyed;" humanity, liberty, and justice shall reign forever under God's most benign scepter. Our opinion is as good as any of the above, hence there are four of them, and the reader has his choice. Jesus certainly had no idea that he was that *Bar Enash*, whose kingdom should last forever, as he considered himself sent to the house of Israel only, and saw his kingdom come to an end before he had really established it. But there is another point to be considered in this connection. The Jews did not consider Daniel a prophet, and Maimonides plainly states*

* Moreh Nebuchim, ii., 45.

וכן רניאל תמצאהו מיחיר המאמר שהם חלומות * * ואין ספק שזאת המדרגה מלטה מסרגה אשר נאמר בהם בחלום ארבר בו

that Daniel's dreams must not be considered prophetical in the sense of the Pentateuch. Therefore, his book was not accepted in the prophetical canon, and was placed in the Hiography. It is very doubtful that this latter collection existed as part of the Bible in the days of Jesus. Why, then, should Jesus have referred to a passage of doubtful authority and meaning, to establish his dignity; why not to an authentic prophetical passage? He did not make this statement, is the only answer we can see; but if he had made it there was no blasphemy in it, according to the Jewish law.

The blasphemy law is in Leviticus (xxiv. 15 to 20), which ordains, "If any man shall curse his God [*i. e.*, by whatever name he may call his God], he shall bear his sin," but the law has nothing to do with it, dictates no punishment, takes no cognizance thereof. "But he who shall curse the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death," be the curser native or alien. Another blasphemy law exists not in the Pentateuch. The ancient Hebrews expounded this law, that none is guilty of blasphemy in the first degree, unless he curses God himself by the name of Jehovah; or, as Maimonides maintains, by the name Adonai.* The penalty of death is only threatened in the first degree. The Mishnah states expressly as the general law, "The blasphemer is not guilty, unless he (in cursing the Deity) has mentioned the name itself" (of Jehovah or Adonai),† so that there can be no doubt whatever that such was the law in Israel. It is clear that the statements made by Mark, in the name of Jesus, had nothing in the world to do with the blasphemy laws of the Jews; that the renting of garments by the high-priest, as the balance of the proceedings, can be fictitious only. But even if there had been a case of blasphemy, self-accusation would not condemn the culprit, without the accusation, trial, witness, etc., as in other cases of capital crime.

Not one point in the whole trial agrees with Jewish law and custom. It is impossible to save it. It must be given up as a transparent and unskilled invention of a Gentile Christian, of the second century, who knew noth-

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* Maimonides, H. Akkum, ii. 7; Talmud Sanhedrin, 55 and 56 and elsewhere

† הנגדף אינו חייב עד שיפרש השם

ing of Jewish law and custom, and was ignorant of the state of civilization in Palestine, in the time of Jesus.

X. LUKE'S TRIAL.

Luke reports no trial to have taken place during the night. He maintains Jesus remained all the time among his captors near the fire. He looked on Peter when he had repeatedly denied him, and that must have been in the morning after the crowing of the cock. But in the morning, Luke maintains (xxii. 66), on the morning of the Passover feast, "the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes came together [where?] and led him into their council." To what purpose this stately procession? Who has ever heard of a whole court going to receive a culprit and escort him to the place of trial? In this case, especially, they being afraid of the people, alarmed the community early in the morning by a procession of the chief dignitaries of the nation, on so unusual a day for legal business as the first day of the Passover. This appears quite improbable.

Remarkable is the fact, that Luke exonerates Caiaphas altogether. He never mentions his name or his presence in the trial, or before Pilate, so that Jesus did not meet the high-priest at all. He must have known from Josephus (Antiquit., xviii., iv. 3) the importance attached to the person of the high-priest, on the three feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacle, when he appeared in the temple in the sacerdotal vestments, as prescribed in the law of Moses. These official garments were kept, since the days of John Hyrcan, in the castle near the temple, which Herod rebuilt and called *Antonia*, so sacred, indeed, that the Romans holding this castle and vestments as a sort of hostage, kept them in a stone chamber, under the seal of the priests, and of the keepers of the temple, the captain of the guard lighting a lamp there every day. Seven days before each of the three festivals, the garments were delivered to the priests, to be purified, and to be worn by the high-priests in the temple during the festive services. The importance attached to the garments naturally suggests, how much more importance must have been attached to the person wearing them. Therefore, Luke must necessarily have supposed that the high-priest, during the feast, was not

to be seen anywhere outside of the temple or his palace. The Mishnah (Yoma, i. 1) reports the ancient practice, that seven days before the day of atonement, the high-priest left his residence, to stay in a lodge of the temple, to the close of divine service on that day. The Yerushalmi adds (*ibid.*, i. 1), that the predecessor of Caiaphas, Simon ben Comithus (or Kimhith), on the day before the day of atonement, went out of the temple to converse with the king (Herod of Galilee?), who, in the conversation, spattered spittle on the high-priest's garments; he considered himself unclean, and unfit to preside next day over the divine services. His brother Judah represented him. Therefore, Luke takes just precaution not to have the high-priest come in contact with anybody on the evening and day of the feast, and leaves him altogether out of the proceedings. There can be but little reasonable doubt that the high-priest in person kept aloof of the whole proceedings, and the brief conversation of Jesus and the high-priest, reported by John, is spurious; because the high-priest that evening, even if it was a day before the feast, did certainly not go near unwashed Roman soldiers, or others who did not observe the law of Levitical cleanness, as the least contact with any of them would have rendered him unfit to wear the sacred vestments on the feast.

Luke supposed Caiaphas had his creatures to do the work for him, in the elders of the people, the chief-priests, and the scribes, all of whom are exonerated by John, so that this clause is evidently copied from Mark. What did they do with Jesus in their council? No witnesses and no false witnesses were examined; none were present; no sort of a legal trial was attempted; they simply asked him, "Art thou the Christ?" To what purpose this question? Were there no witnesses in the city to testify that Jesus had been proclaimed the Messiah king, and that he acquiesced in this proclamation? But the sequel shows that Luke merely tried to improve Mark's account, in which he partially succeeded. When Jesus admitted that he was the Messiah, those elders said, "What need we any further witness, for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth?" These words are literally transposed from Mark's nightly trial to Luke's morning trial. No sensible reader will suppose for a moment that the same ques-

tion and answer, literally the same, were made twice. Therefore Luke must have copied this portion from Mark, and is exposed to all the objections of the law as stated above, so that neither Luke's nor Mark's trial can be received as a fact.

This becomes still more evident from the reply of Jesus as reported by Luke: "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." It is impossible to ascertain how Luke came to know the first part of this reply, which none of the other gospels has. He could only have imagined, as he had no extra reporter in that council. But the second part is an improvement on Mark. According to Luke, Jesus says not, *they will see* him come in the clouds and sit at God's right hand, because he knew it was not true, and God has no right hand. He made of it "the right hand of the power of God," which phrase conveys no meaning whatsoever, but it was the best he could make of Mark's "right hand of power." The attempted improvement leaves no doubt that Luke copied from Mark, that he transferred the nightly trial to the morning, left out the high-priest altogether, changed the matter and the words to come in part over Mark's errors. It is again the same case as above. Mark wrote, Matthew copied, Luke amended, and John denied both trials, mentions none, because he knew of none. In the face of all the internal and external arguments produced, no sensible reader will expect that those trials actually took place. We may consider this point settled. The only question can be, When and why was this written? which we can not expound here, as it was written at least one century after the death of Jesus. The fact is, we have no knowledge whatever of the fate of Jesus, from the moment of his capture to his appearance before Pilate. There was no trial, no investigation, no conversation with the high-priest. The only point in which the gospels agree is, that Jesus was retained till morning in the court of the high-priest, under guard of his captors, and even this we know on the authority of Mark only.

We hardly need say that the work of the harmonizers is here in vain. If we drop our arguments and adopt with them two trials, one in the night and another in the

morning, it makes the matter so much the worse. All blunders against law and custom remain the same, and the time too short for one trial was certainly too short for two. Besides, Luke's trial in the morning, which must have taken some time, is plainly contradicted by Mark, who maintains Jesus was crucified at nine o'clock in the morning. We discuss this point in the next chapter.

For nearly seventeen centuries Christians have taken this conglomeration of contradictions and improbabilities as matter of fact, although if met with in any other book it would have been exposed a thousand times. So mighty is uninquired faith, and so easily it is deceived and satisfied. Read with the critic's eye, and nothing is left of the entire account, from the capture of Jesus to the morning scene before Pilate, and this again is partly spurious, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

The next point in the gospel narrative is the trial of Jesus before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, and the judgment given by that notorious dignitary of Tiberius. The four gospels agree that early in the morning Jesus was delivered over to Pilate; that he was accused of high treason against Rome, having been proclaimed king of the Jews; and that in consequence thereof he was condemned first to be scourged and then to be crucified, all of which was done in hot haste. In all other points the narrative of the four evangelists differ widely, and so essentially that one story can not be made of the four accounts; nor can any particular points stand the test of historical criticism and vindicate its substantiality as a fact. Let us examine the points in logical succession.

I. THE TIME.

According to Mark and Matthew, the chief priests in the morning held a secret council with the elders of the people, and then delivered him up to Pilate. This secret conclave and its transactions could not possibly have been known to Mark or Matthew, and could not have taken

place according to Jewish law and custom. Therefore John has no account of this secret conclave. It was the first day of Passover, according to the Synoptics. The divine service in the temple began "when the east was all lit," *i. e.*, early in the morning,* when all officiating priests were to be at their respective posts, and none of them was permitted to leave before the close of the service.† Nor is it any way probable that on the first day of Passover, when the numerous pilgrims were present, any of the chief priests would have deserted their respective posts.

But omit these proceedings and take for granted with John, that early in the morning Jesus was transported by his captors from the palace of Caiaphas to that of the governor. The Passover being about vernal equinox, and Jerusalem near the 32d degree, north longitude, six in the morning was certainly called early. Say Pilate was all ready to receive and try Jesus at six o'clock in the morning, and went to business at once. Then the whole trial, all the conversations between Pilate and Jesus, Pilate and his wife, Pilate and the priests, Pilate and the people, the priests and the people, Jesus and Herod, the mocking by Herod's servants, including the walk from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod and back, three times dressing and undressing Jesus; then the mocking scene in the Prætorium by the Roman soldiers, the scourging, and the walk to Golgotha—all this variety of scenes, walks, conversations, and acts took less than three hours. "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him" (Mark, xv. 25). The third hour means nine in the morning. Is this possible? Is this history? John understood this mistake; and as he differs with the Synoptics in the day, so also in the hour. He maintains (xix. 14), Jesus was not crucified at nine o'clock in the morning, but it was nearly twelve M. when Pilate closed the trial scene at Gabbatha by pronouncing judgment over Jesus. But the sixth hour, or twelve at noon, aside of the statement of Mark, is also with Luke (xxiii. 44) and with Matthew (xxvii. 45) long after the crucifixion. In point of time, then, either John or the Synoptics have chronicled an error. Jesus could not have been crucified

* Maimonides, Themidim, i. 2.
† Maimonides, Biath Hammikdash, ii. 15.

at 9 A. M., and then again after twelve M. As little as the harmonizers can press all those events and speeches into the brief space of three hours, they can unite the different dates of the Synoptics and John.

II. THE PERSONS.

Mark narrates not who escorted Jesus on his way to Pilate. Before Pilate, the chief priests alone appear as the adversaries (xv. 3, 11). The people assembling afterward before the palace. did not come up with Jesus or on his account; the friends of Barabbas, whom they wished to have released, form the crowd outside and do all the clamoring. So the only persons appearing in this part of the drama are Pilate and the chief priests inside, and the friends of Barabbas outside. With Matthew, however, the scene enlarges, as legends naturally grow; the elders of the people (xxvii. 12) are added to the adversaries of Jesus; a woman, the wife of Pilate, looms up in the rear with a prophetical dream concerning that righteous man; Pilate performs a Jewish custom, the washing of hands, for dramatic effect, and a mad mob clamors outside, "His blood be on us and on our children." Why did Matthew add these embellishments to the scene? All these additional persons and points were evidently unknown to Mark, and not accredited by either Luke or John. We must investigate this point in its proper place. Here we must call attention to the queries asked and answered, which show that not only Matthew but also Luke and John took their accounts from Mark.

III. THE QUERIES.

As far as Matthew and Mark agree, the trial before Pilate was opened by the governor with the question, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus affirmed this without any qualification. Pilate is represented as having been fully informed of the claims of Jesus to the royal dignity, as he must naturally have been by what had transpired in Jerusalem. After Jesus had confessed his pretensions, his trial was virtually closed and his doom sealed. Still, after this the chief priests, and according to Matthew also the elders, accuse him of other crimes not specified in those gospels, to which Jesus made no reply. This silence elicits Pilate's surprise or admiration, either at the equanimity of the accused, or his unwillingness to

defend himself, and prompts him to save the life of Jesus. While we can not see to what purpose any accusation was advanced against Jesus, after his unqualified confession which, before the Roman, did condemn him to the death of a rebel, we can not comprehend how the silence of Jesus could have changed the acknowledged fact or the existing law, or how it moved Pilate to compassion or admiration, unless we suppose, to which the sources entitle not, that Pilate took Jesus to be an insane fanatic. Luke and John felt this point, and made the attempt to set it aright, in which they failed entirely. We discuss these points below.

Meanwhile, and accidentally, a crowd assembled outside (these two evangelists continue), for the avowed purpose of releasing Barabbas (Mark, xv. 8). It is to them that Pilate directs the question, "Will ye that I release unto you the king of the Jews?" which Matthew explains to the effect that either Barabbas or Jesus should be given them (xxvii. 17, 21). The people, persuaded by the chief priests, and also by the elders, as Matthew wants it, chose Barabbas. The suasion of the chief priests is evidently superfluous in the account, as the crowd had come for the very purpose of liberating Barabbas, whom they knew as the leader of a popular rebellion in Jerusalem (Luke, xxiii. 19), while the evangelists leave it altogether uncertain that any of them knew much of Jesus or his teachings. It is quite natural that they should have selected Barabbas, as only the choice between the two had been left them. Next come the two questions, "What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the king of the Jews?" and when they replied, "Crucify him!" he continues, "Why, what evil hath he done?" and they clamor again, "Crucify him!" This ends the scene, as far as the two evangelists agree. These three questions are rather peculiar. Pilate had heard of Jesus, that he had been proclaimed the king of the Jews, and accusing the people that they called him the king of the Jews, still asks, "What evil hath he done?" The people of New York proclaim James Brown king of New York, and James Brown, placed before a court-martial, confesses to be the king of New York, and there is none to deny or gainsay it. Then the chief of that court-martial asks, What wrong has he done? and maintains it is on account

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of the envy of his enemies that James Brown is brought to trial. There is too much self-contradiction in this. Because the people vociferated, "Crucify him!" if they did so, therefore Pilate ought to have given up Jesus as an innocent fanatic, since none acknowledged his royal claims. Pilate was not under the power of the people; they groaned under his oppression. Why then ask them—why not ask himself—what that man had done to deserve death? The situation is changed here altogether. The tyrant becomes subject, and the subject the tyrant. The bloodthirsty and reckless Pilate, all on a sudden, experiences a spasmodic feeling of righteousness and obliging politeness to the victims of his bloody despotism; and the victims of his villainous outrages are transformed into a horde of ravenous wolves against one of their own kinsmen, contrary to the proverbial affections of the Hebrews for their own. John attempts to account also for this unnatural situation, but he is again unsuccessful, as we shall see below.

IV. LUKE'S VERSION.

Luke, with these accounts before him, in the first place drops out of the narrative the additions of Matthew, viz., the wife of Pilate and her dream, his washing of the hands, and the outsiders' vociferation. If the passage had been in Matthew when Luke wrote, which is doubtful, he had sufficient reason to drop it. A heathen woman has a prophetical dream, and thus stands in connection with the divine power. This would have been too impious for Luke. He could not have accredited it, had he seen it. The washing of the hands as a symbolic act, to denote a person's innocence in the blood shed unjustly, was exclusively Jewish, and is recorded in the Pentateuch as a divine command on a certain occasion (Deut., xxi). Luke could not have believed that the heathen Roman, in this particular case, should have observed a commandment of the Jews, and perform a ceremony which must have appeared ridiculous to him. Therefore Luke must have dropped this point, together with the remarks of Pilate, and the vociferation of the people connected with it. John did the same in these two points: he omitted them. If those two evangelists did not accredit the additional points of Matthew, it can certainly not be

expected of any critic now to adopt them as facts. It may have appeared to Luke that Matthew or his informant was mistaken in the wife of Pilate. He thought of the wife of Felix, Drusilla, who was a Jewess by birth, and had some notion to change her religion a second time (Acts, xxiv. 24). This mistake accounts also for the second. The husband of a Jewess, though heathenized, may have entertained some respect for Jewish symbols; if it was not brought in for the express purpose of having the Jews clamor after the blood of Jesus, to show how magnanimous the Roman and how bloodthirsty the Jew was, which is one of the most conspicuous objects in the gospels and Acts.

Luke works the second point in this manner. He adopts the stately procession of Matthew, escorting Jesus to Pilate. The governor, however, knows nothing of Jesus, has not heard of his entry into the city, his deportment in the temple, his influence upon the people, or the threatening rebellion; the chief priests and the scribes must accuse him of "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king." The middle part of this accusation is not true; but it appears to be intended that the Jews state a falsehood. Pilate, altogether ignorant of the precedents of Jesus, has no confidence in the accusation and asks Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" to which he replies, "Thou sayest *it*." Luke having found this question and answer in Mark and Matthew, repeats them literally; but less acquainted with the Hebrew idiom than his predecessors, he understands the phrase "Thou sayest it," not as an unqualified affirmation, as it was actually understood by the Jews; he takes it literally, viz., "Thou sayest, I am a king; I do not say so, and let Pilate declare, I find no fault in this man." So he attempts an explanation of the point, why did Pilate hold Jesus to be innocent after his own confession of guilt, in the main point. Had he, however, understood the reply of Jesus correctly, he could not have imagined for a moment that Pilate found no fault with a man who maintains to be the king of a people subject to Rome. He could certainly not have discovered the innocence of Jesus in his reply. Having thus changed the spirit of the scene by a small addition to the former account, and a little mistake in a

few words, he comes back to his predecessors and, filling up a vacuum, as it were, informs us of what Jesus was especially accused by his adversaries. Mark and Matthew did not state so, still Luke adds, that the Jews then said to Pilate, "He stirreth up the people, teaching through all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." Like the above also these are the words of Luke and not of the persons represented, because they are not true. Jesus did not preach in Judea, except in Jerusalem. If he did stir up any people, it was in Galilee; but not in Judea. Still the very object of Luke is, that the accusers should say falsehoods. Their chief priests and elders, the very representatives of that people, should approach the governor with misrepresentations, although it was in his power and his duty to investigate and to judge properly, in order to place the innocence of Jesus and the magnanimity of the Roman in the best possible light.

Next Luke describes an entirely new scene, to which none of the other evangelists refer. Having learned that Jesus was from Galilee, and Herod of Galilee being in the city, he sent Jesus to that prince. On the first day of Passover, during the hours of divine service in the temple, without notice, preparation or ceremony, Herod receives a criminal, as Jesus was accused to be, and sits in judgment over him just for the fun of the thing: "Because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him." There is no moral motive in the account, as though the life of a man was nothing to Herod and his courtiers; no political motive, none but the childish desire to see some miracles performed. Luke had no knowledge of the Herodian character. The Herodian princes were certainly the last to care for a miracle. Again on the first day of Passover and during the hours of divine service. the chief priests and scribes, the heads of the people, go to Herod to accuse a criminal, while the myriads of Israel worship on Mount Moriah. Instead of investigating the case with any show of propriety or common decency, as one would expect of a Hebrew prince educated at the imperial court of Rome, the servants and the prince mock and insult the prisoner, clothe him in purple and send him back to Pilate. Jesus, also, instead of showing any respect to the prince of his people and the representatives of his breth-

ren, as one is entitled to expect of everybody almost, is silent as a rock, has nothing to say either of his innocence or their wickedness, his faith or their unbelief. Luke did certainly not expect that any Jewish reader should believe a word of this anecdote. It was intended for simple-minded heathens in the Syrian villages, who had defective ideas of a prince and his courtiers, the priests and representatives of a people, the sanctity of the Passover among the Jews, the character and dignity of man. He intended to tell them that Herod also acknowledged the innocence of Jesus, although he was too wicked to do him justice, and that the whole people with all its chiefs were guilty of the death of Jesus; and brought forth a farce which not even John or any of the apocryphal writers would accredit. They must have read it, still they took no notice.

Jesus returning to Pilate, so Luke continues, the latter convoked a meeting of the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, and the large meeting was brought together and organized by magic, as it were, all before nine in the morning. It is not the people who had come to the governor to ask the release of Barabbas, as Mark and Matthew narrate. No, it is an extra meeting convened for the purpose, of which nobody besides Luke knew anything. Pilate, like a vulgar stump-speaker, harangues that whole meeting and declares that neither he nor Herod found Jesus guilty of any crime meriting the penalty of death. He therefore proposed to chastise Jesus and let him go. So he gets over the awkward question, Why was Jesus scourged? After this whole intermezzo, all before nine o'clock, of which Mark and Matthew were ignorant, Luke returns to their account, but changes its entire character. Not the friends of Barabbas, who had come to release him, but the enemies of Jesus, the whole crowd, priests, elders, rulers, and people vociferate: not to give them Barabbas, but "Away with this man, but release unto us Barabbas," so that the destruction of Jesus is the first thought in their minds and the release of Barabbas the second. Next he reproduces, by way of circumscription, the last two questions and answers as chronicled by Mark and Matthew, the vociferating always done, not by the friends of Barabbas misled by the chief priests, but by the whole crowd.

None, whatever his learning, skill, or sagacity may be, will ever succeed in harmonizing this story of Luke with that of Mark, in spirit, persons, and events; or in comprehending how all this could have taken place within less than three hours. If Mark is right, the additions of Matthew and Luke are arbitrary and erroneous, and the spirit which the latter imposes on the story is malicious.

Without any additional sources before him, Luke attempted to comment on Mark and Matthew, and to place not merely the chief priests and rulers in the worst light, but also the people congregated before the gubernatorial residence, so that the whole weight of the crime falls upon the Jews, *i. e.*, those few who were there; and Pilate is entirely exonerated. The chief priests and the rulers made the accusation, and in connection with the people assembled did all the vociferation; but Pilate resisted steadfastly from the beginning to the end, until he finally yielded to the popular clamor, not to release Barabbas, which is the main point of the people according to Mark (xv. 15) and Matthew (xxvii. 26), but to crucify Jesus, which is the main point with Luke (xxiii. 24, 25). The difference in the close of the scene is so strongly marked that no attentive reader can be mistaken in the intention of Luke, in changing the entire spirit of the narrative. Notwithstanding his manifest desire to exonerate Pilate, and intensify the guilt of Jesus, he did not accept Matthew's addition of Pilate's wife and her dream, the washing of the hands, and the supposed vociferation of the Jews, "His blood be on us, and on our children;" although both fitted exactly into the spirit of the narrative. This forces us to the conclusion, that the two additional points of Matthew were not in his gospel at the time when Luke wrote, and were afterward interpolated from the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, where those two passages are found, literally and exactly.* Therefore we believe to be entitled to the conclusion, that the additions of Matthew resting on the authority of an apocryphal gospel, written several centuries *post festum* in a country far away from the locality where the affair transpired, known and acknowledged a spurious production, and intended as a pious fraud, deserve no credit, and can not be accepted by any critical reader as possibly authentic. The passage,

* Gospel of Nicodemus, ii., 1, 2; vi., 20, 21.

"His blood be on us and on our children," is an imitation of David's curse pronounced on Joab after he had killed Abner (2 Samuel, iii. 28, 29).

V. JOHN'S VERSION.

Both additions to Mark—that of Matthew and Luke—are dropped by John in his presentation of the affair, without affording the least opportunity to harmonizers to press them in somewhere; as it was evidently his intention to give a full and accurate description of the entire proceedings. Having before him the three versions of the Synoptics, and no other sources, John, as much as possible, attempts to expound them and to overcome the difficulties they present. He begins (xviii. 28) with a denial of the trials before the high-priest, chief priests, elders and scribes, their consultations and resolutions, because he must have seen the impossibility to save them; and had Jesus transported directly from Caiaphas to Pilate, right after the crowing of the cock. He omits Matthew's stately procession, and informs us (xix. 6), that "the Jews" present on the whole occasion, besides the Roman soldiers, were the very persons who had captured Jesus and some chief priests. "The chief priests and officers," he states expressly, did all the vociferation, and these officers may have been priests, Levites or Israelites, or other hirelings in the high-priest's employ. So there was no crowd, no tumult, none of the people had anything to do with it, no elders and no scribes, no Pharisees and no Zadducees were present before Pilate's judgment-hall. John at once exonerates all Jews, except a few chief priests and servants, from participating in any shape or form in the capture, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus. According to this evangelist's presentation of the story, Jesus fell the victim of a supposed political necessity; hence he was disposed of as early and as quietly as possible, without any knowledge of his friends.

The first difficulty which John met with in the accounts of the Synoptics, was naturally this: How could they know what was spoken or done in the judgment-hall of Pilate, where, beside him and his officers, only the adversaries of Jesus were present? Either his adversaries must have reported it, or official documents must have preserved it. In the first case, the report is unreliable, as it

must have appeared to the Synoptics, who changed it and added to it, each in his own way. In the second place, the question would have suggested itself, Where are the documents to control the evangelical statements? This was so vexatious a question to the primitive Christians, that at the end of the third century a book on the subject was forged on the name of Nicodemus, the friend of Jesus, and called "The Acts of Pontius Pilate." The author of that book, now called "The Gospel of Nicodemus," maintains that Nicodemus, the friend and disciple of Jesus, who was present at the whole affair, described it and also the exploits of Christ in hell, his resurrection and ascension to heaven. This gospel, written in Hebrew, as one added to it in the fourth century, was found by the Emperor Theodosius, in Jerusalem, in the hall of Pontius Pilate, among the public records. The author does not say it was compiled from official records. Had any been in existence, the forging of a book would have been unnecessary; he simply maintains that Nicodemus and other Jews, friends of Jesus, witnessed the whole proceedings, and the former described them in that gospel. It being admitted on all hands that the gospel of Nicodemus was a pious fraud, to silence opponents, it must also be admitted that no documents of Pilate were known to the Christians, which would establish the facts of the trial and crucifixion, and that no friends of Jesus were present in the judgment-hall to report the proceedings.

John, in the face of these essential difficulties, has resort to a new point. He says the Jews would not go into the judgment-hall, "lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover." Consequently Pilate was obliged to go out to them. Outside of the hall every body could have heard what was said, and have it reported to the disciples. He leaves his readers, furthermore, to suppose that the conversation between Jesus and Pilate in the judgment-hall, was reported to those outside by Pilate himself, when he informed them, "I find in him no fault at all." But this brings him in conflict with the Synoptics, who maintain the Passover had been eaten the evening before, and inform us that the accusors of Jesus were inside and the crowd outside that hall. Besides, John makes two mistakes in this point. In the first place, the mere going into the judgment-hall did not make any

body unclean at all, according to Jewish laws. And in the second place, if any body should have considered himself defiled, a mere bath would have sufficed to overcome these scruples. The law is very explicit on this point, although John did not know it. Those only defiled by corporeal impurities were not permitted to eat the Passover in due season. Those defiled by contact with impure things, also with a carcass or an unclean animal, after a simple bath were permitted to eat of this sacrificial meal.* Common sense will suggest to every sensible man, that the numerous pilgrims from foreign countries could not have reached Jerusalem without contact with heathens. We must believe either the Synoptics or John was misinformed in this point; either John or the chief priests did not know the law. Therefore we can only look upon this point as an unsuccessful attempt on the part of John to account for the source of information from which he and the Synoptics compiled this narrative. This abortive attempt, however, shows that the evangelists had no better sources at their command than traditions based on hearsay, as enlarged and embellished in the century after the event had transpired.

Next, John follows the lead of Luke, and has the Jews accuse Jesus as a malefactor, which Pilate receives with displeasure and suspicion. Both writing for Gentile Christians, nothing could be more important to them than the testimony of Pilate to the innocence of Jesus, and nothing more welcome to them than an opportunity to expose the wickedness of the Jews. John adds to Luke's account, that Pilate said to the Jews they should take and judge him according to their laws; to which they objected, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This was put in rather childishly. The governor must have known well that the right over life and death had been taken from the Hebrew people. John did not think of the turn given to his words by Nicodemus's gospel (iv. 16, 17), that it was intended to suggest to the Jews his opinion that Jesus should not be put to death, but merely "whipped and sent away," against which the Jews remonstrated;

* אי זהו טמא שנדחה לפסח שני כל מי שאינו יכול לאכול את הפסח בי"ד בניסן ספני טומאתו כגון זבים וזבות נדות ויולדות ובועלי נדות אבל הגוגל בגבלה וישרץ וכיוצא בהן ביום י"ד הז' טובל ושוחטין עליו אחר שיטבול ולערב כשיעריב השמש אוכל את הפסח Maimonides Korban Pesach Chapter vi. 1.

for it is not the penalty itself, but the mode of the penalty, which John thinks was changed by this refusal of the Jews; that it be fulfilled, he states, what Jesus had said, "WHAT death he should die." The Jews could not have crucified him, according to their laws, if they had inflicted on him the highest penalty of the law, since crucifixion was exclusively Roman. John omits Luke's specified accusations by the Jews, and puts in this new point, to inform us that, also against the will of Pilate, Jesus had to be crucified, because he had prophesied what death he should die. None of the Synoptics has answered the simple question, If the priests, elders, Pharisees, Jews, or all of them wanted Jesus so badly out of the way, why did they not have him quietly assassinated after he was in their power, and be done at once? John understood this difficulty, and informs us, they could not kill him, because he had prophesied what death he should die; so he could die no other. It was dire necessity, that the heathen symbol of life and immortality—the cross—should be brought to honor among the early Christians, and Jesus had to die on the cross, in a position unknown to the ancient Romans, even if no Jew and no Roman had ever lived, according to John, simply because it was so prophesied. Knowing the doctrinal object of John in making this new point, there is not the slightest cause to suspect that he considered it a fact.

After this overture of his own, John returns to the Synoptics, and Pilate asks Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" In place of the simple answer recorded by the Synoptics, "Thou sayest it," Jesus asks a question in return, receives an answer, is asked again, and then gives a theological definition of his kingdom of heaven in the spiritual sense of Paul, until finally Pilate asks again whether Jesus was a king, to which he replies, "Thou sayest it: I am a king," which he further explains in the sense of John, so that none will deny him the authorship of the entire passage, down to the question of Pilate, "What is truth?" We can well imagine why John added to the answer of Jesus, "Thou sayest it: I am a king." Luke's mistake in this reply has been noticed. John's addition is intended simply to correct Luke. But we can not imagine where John learned the additional conversation between Jesus and Pilate; or how he came to the be-

lief that the haughty and despotic favorite of Sejan would permit a captive to catechize him. If, however, all this could be imagined, nobody is able to see how Jesus could have expounded his title and mission in the sense of Paul, who was the author of the Son-of-God doctrine and the theological kingdom of heaven, as expressed in the words "My kingdom is not of this world." Still, if we could imagine all this, we could not see what good this defense could have done Jesus before a Roman who had not the remotest idea of a theological kingdom of heaven. And yet, by this peculiar defense John intended to explain why the first Synoptics say Pilate was in favor of Jesus also, after he had confessed to be the king of the Jews. To a defense of this kind Pilate would have replied, that every agitator and pretender, failing in his revolutionary attempts, might resort to the same plea exactly—a plea not recognized by the laws of Rome. He could have replied, the servants of Jesus did not defend him, because it was not in their power to resist successfully the government, or because they were cowards, or because they were not armed. Any of these replies would do, although none was necessary, as neither the law of Rome nor any body else at that time recognized a theological kingdom of heaven; a king without a land and a country without a soil; freedom and law in heaven, oppression and slavery on earth; misery and suffering here, to acquire bliss in the next state of existence. Neither Jesus nor his immediate apostles ever advanced anything like it.

The substance of John's addition to the Synoptics' narrative in this point is the attempt to explain their peculiar statement, viz., that Pilate was in favor of Jesus after he had confessed to be the king of the Jews—on dogmatical grounds, which originated after the death of Jesus. Luke overcame this difficulty by a mistake which John corrected. It is, therefore, certain that Luke and John felt the difficulty of the point in question, and had no means to adjust it.

After John has introduced Barabbas, exactly in the same spirit as Luke, and at variance with Mark and Matthew, he informs us that Pilate had Jesus scourged, the soldiers put a crown of thorns on his head, dressed him in the purple robe, smote him with their hands, and said, "Hail, king of the Jews!" With the Synoptics, this is

the end of the painful scene. The walk to Golgotha follows it immediately. Not so with John. He narrates, after the scourging and mocking repeated attempts of Pilate to save Jesus. What was John's object with this second addition to the narrative of the Synoptics? If it was to bring in the Son-of-God doctrine, and the fear of Pilate on hearing it (xix. 7, 8), in order to convince his readers that Pilate received it with a holy awe, while the Jews rejected it, he might have done it before, without contradicting the account of the Synoptics. Pilate had Jesus scourged and mocked, and then in this humbled and suffering condition exposed him to the chief priests, in order to move them to pity, which those fanatic barbarians did not feel after all, and forced Pilate to crucify their victim. It sounds strange, that among all the chief priests and servants assembled, there was none, not one, like Pilate, compassionate, whose heartless despotism is so well known; not one as humane as the Roman who had massacred thousands in cold blood. This is about as natural as the kiss of Judas, and as likely as the miraculous conception. The strangest, probably, in this matter is, that Luke, who evidently did all in his power to intensify the guilt of the Jews and exonerate the Roman; and Matthew, whose last addition has the same object in view, should not have known this second addition of John fitting so exactly into the spirit of their respective stories; if not, some readers should consider it strangest that the author of the gospel of Nicodemus, who compiles all sorts of accounts in this affair, and had also John's version before his eyes, makes no mention of this second addition of John, not even that Jesus was scourged or mocked. This amounts almost to positive evidence that the passage was not in John's narrative when the gospel of Nicodemus was written, or that being there it was discredited. Anyhow, before John, after him, and outside of his gospel, there exists no evidence that his second addition is a record of fact.

But whoever was the author of the passage, what caused him to write it? There is another point in the narrative of Mark and Matthew, ignored by Luke and Nicodemus, which John had to bring in; and this point is the scourge which, the first evangelists affirm, was applied to Jesus before the crucifixion. This is contrary to

Jewish law, which permits no two punishments to be inflicted on one person.* In the case of two crimes proved on one convict, the punishment for the lesser crime must be remitted by the infliction of the other.† None condemned to death could have been scourged after his conviction by Jewish law. The penalty of crucifixion, according to Roman law and custom, was inflicted on slaves, and in the provinces on rebels only. The highest penalty of the law inflicted on slaves, was to be scourged first and then crucified.‡ The label or inscription on the breast, intimating the crime, was usual in Rome.§

These facts suggest a few questions which Luke and John could not have overlooked. If Pilate, indeed, befriended Jesus and really wished to save him, as Mark advances, and the other evangelists down to Nicodemus repeat, why did he not do it? There is no precedent in Jewish history that the people resorted to rebellion, or preferred charges against any ruler, because he pardoned a supposed or real criminal. In this case, especially, when but yesterday, as it were, the multitude listened with delight to Jesus, and clamored "Hosannah!" which Pilate could not help knowing, there was certainly no danger in dismissing him or sending him away somewhere outside of the reach of his adversaries. As regards the probability of charges which might have been preferred by the Jewish rulers, in case of disregarding their will, it is certainly absurd to believe that a governor of a province should dread the consequences of an act of humanity, if his record is as full of blood and violence as that of Pilate, and especially in this particular case, without any demonstration of violence or actual resistance having taken place. No Roman governor of Judea was removed, reprimanded, or any way molested for any act of humanity. The conduct of Pilate, according to the gospel, is so entirely averse to his character, as described by Josephus and Philo, that it is incredible on this ground alone.

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* The formula is—איקארם לוקה ומת איקארם לוקה ומשלם—"None shall be scourged and put to death—none shall be scourged and pay."

† This formula reads—קים ליה בדרבה מני—"The lesser punishment is set aside by the greater."

‡ Pliny, Epistle x. 40. "Sub furca caesi"—"In crucem acti sunt."

§ Adam's Roman Antiquities—Dean's 1842 edition, p. 181.

The next question is this. If Pilate, contrary to his general character, and in violation of his convictions, without reference to precedents and probabilities, was weak and foolish enough to yield to a clamoring crowd, and to sacrifice an innocent man to the momentary passions of a faction, in spite of another and certainly more numerous class, why did he impose upon him the very worst and most cruel punishment of the Roman law—crucifixion, when it was absolutely in his power to avoid it? The evangelists attempt to come out of this dilemma by the assumed fact, that the crowd vociferated, "Crucify him!" This may have been put into the narrative; and, to our mind, there is no doubt it has been put in for the very purpose of harmonizing the two opposite allegations—that Pilate befriended Jesus and still had him crucified. Was that proud and heartless Roman such a slave of a clamoring crowd, that he lacked the courage of deviating from its dictation? History has no precedent and no parallel to these proceedings. There was certainly no cause of apprehension in the change of the punishment from crucifixion to a more humane execution, especially as crucifixion, contrary to Jewish law, must have been an abomination to the Jews. This question falls with special weight on Mark and Matthew, who have all the clamoring done, not by the enemies of Jesus but by the friends of Barabbas. It could certainly exercise no influence on Pilate, whether they cried or cried not, "Crucify him!" The alternative left in this case is, either Pilate did not befriend or not crucify Jesus.

The third question is still more fatal to the evangelical account. If Pilate, in obedience to the clamoring crowd and in violation of his better convictions, ordered the crucifixion of Jesus, why did he enforce upon him the severest penalty of the law, inflicted in exceptional cases on slaves only? Why did he, in defiance of the Jewish law, have Jesus scourged before crucifixion, which the clamoring crowd did not demand, and for which no imaginable necessity existed? If Jesus was crucified at all, the scourging preceding it must have been very barbarous, for he died after a few hours on the cross (three, according to John), while others were hanging sometimes for days before expiring. This was the most troublesome question to Luke and John. Mark (xv. 15) and Matthew (xxvii.

26) state positively that, on command of Pilate, Jesus was first scourged and then handed over to the soldiers for crucifixion. Luke seeing the gross contradiction in the alleged friendship of Pilate and his treatment of Jesus, maintains that Pilate only proposed to scourge Jesus and set him free (xxiii. 22); the Jews not being satisfied, Pilate not only did not have Jesus scourged, but did not give him over to the soldiers to be crucified: he merely abandoned him to the fury of the Jews (xxiii. 25). So Luke has an entirely new story from the beginning to the end, with the manifest objects in view, to overcome the contradictions and inconsistencies of Mark and Matthew, to intensify the crime of the Jews, to exonerate Pilate entirely and consistently, to have the innocence of Jesus acknowledged by both Pilate and Herod.

As Luke transcribed the story of his predecessors and added his commentaries to suit his purposes, so John again transcribed Luke's story and added his commentaries to it. But the scourging was too positively maintained by Mark and Matthew to be omitted. John admitting it, on a hint of Luke, used it to suit his purpose. Luke merely says, Pilate proposed to scourge Jesus and then let him free, to which the populace objected and the scourging was not inflicted. John turns the proposition into a fact, has Jesus scourged, then exposed to the people, and Pilate appeals again for him and again in vain. This is the object of John's second addition to the story of the Synoptics. He attempted to harmonize the scourging of Jesus with the alleged friendship of Pilate. Whoever wrote that part of John's story, this and nothing else could have been his object.

VI. A RESUME.

Recapitulating what has been developed in this chapter we may safely assert the following points:

1. Mark contains the only source of this story, which was literally copied by Matthew.

2. The additions in Matthew were not in that gospel when Luke and John wrote theirs, and appear to have been taken later from the gospel of Nicodemus.

3. The contradictions in the account of Mark and Matthew are (*a*) that Pilate, after Jesus had confessed to be the king of the Jews, should have attempted to save him;

(*b*) that he who was a noted and reckless despot should have submitted to the clamors of a passionate multitude, contrary to his better conviction; (*c*) that the alleged fact of Pilate's friendship for Jesus stands in uncompromising contradiction with the crucifixion, and especially with the scourging of Jesus.

4. Luke, without being in possession of any new sources, changed the story (*a*) to harmonize the above contradictions; (*b*) to intensify the guilt of the Jews; (*c*) to exonerate Pilate and the Roman soldiers; (*d*) to have the innocence of Jesus established, not only by Pilate but also by Herod.

5. Luke's addition of sending Jesus also to Herod was either not in that gospel when John and Nicodemus wrote theirs, or it was there and considered spurious by them.

6. John like Luke was not in possession of any additional sources. Commenting on Mark's record of the event he adopted the spirit and method of Luke to the same purpose, and added such commentaries of his own as, in his opinion, would harmonize the contradictions in Mark's accounts, and at the same time hint that the notices could have been collected on the spot.

7. With the exception of two sentences (xviii. 31; xix. 12) in John's additions, there is no proof on record that they were known or believed before or after John wrote, up to the end of the third century, when the gospel of Nicodemus was written, and incorporated those two sentences in part only (Nicodemus iii. 1; vi. 8); or that John actually wrote them.

This leads us back to Mark with the result, either Jesus was not scourged and crucified, or the alleged friendship of Pilate and his attempt to save Jesus is not true. Both of them can not be true. If it is not true that Jesus was scourged and crucified, then the whole story is a dogmatic legend written for the purpose either of dramatic effect in the religious mysteries, or of vilifying the Jews and flattering the Romans, on account of the political situation in the time of Hadrian, a point which we must discuss in the next chapter. If Jesus was scourged and crucified by command of Pontius Pilate, then all after the first query, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" and the first reply, "Thou sayest it," is fictitious, and was invented for any of the above purposes. But only in this latter case it is

possible that the crucifixion took place at nine in the morning, as Mark says, and that Jesus expired on the cross after a few hours, being nearly dead from scourging before he was crucified. The question must be thoroughly investigated before we can arrive at a final decision. Therefore we postpone it to our next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

Outside of the New Testament there exists no evidence whatever, in book, inscription, monument, or coin, that Jesus was either scourged or crucified. Not even the catacombs of Rome offer the slightest evidence to establish this fact. Tacitus states in a very dubious passage that Jesus "suffered" under Pilate, but he says not what. Crucifixion is not mentioned or even hinted at. Josephus, Plinius, Philo, and all their cotemporaries never refer to the fact of crucifixion or any belief thereof. In the Talmud Jesus is not referred to as the crucified one, but as the hanged one (תלוי), while elsewhere it is narrated he was stoned to death, so that it is evident they were ignorant of the manner of death which he suffered. Still none maintains he was crucified. The fact that Paul (1 Cor., xvii. 23) places such stress on his teaching "Christ crucified," may be taken as a proof that the crucifixion was denied by other teachers of the Gospel, as it actually was by a sect in the apostolic age.

I. THE SYMBOL OF THE CROSS.

There are a number of arguments in favor of the allegation that the early Christian teachers adopted the cross and the crucifixion story on account of the cross, for dogmatic purposes; and one of those arguments is the symbolic signification of the cross in pre-christian times. It is well known that the cross was the symbol of life and eternity long before the Christian story transpired. The oldest proof thereto is in Ezekiel (ix. 4, 6). In this chapter, Ezekiel narrates a vision he had of the punishment to be visited on the Hebrew worshipers of pagan deities. Among the destroyers called to execute the will

of God, there is one scribe who is commanded to mark the innocent and oppressed in Jerusalem by setting the letter *Tav* upon their foreheads, and those thus marked shall be saved, the others shall be slain. The words והתוית תו *Vehithvitha Tav* are rendered, "And thou shalt set a sign," but the verb without the noun *Tav* signifies the same (1 Samuel, xxi. 14), so that the noun *Tav* is added to show the peculiar sign to be made. *Tav* is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the ancient Hebrew, as in use in the time of Ezekiel, the *Tav* was a plain cross ┼ or X, as in the original Egyptian hieroglyphics. From this upright cross of the Egyptians and Hebrews, the Greeks made T, which was Latinized.* Here, then, we have the cross as the symbol of life and eternity, about 600 B. C., popularly known. The goddess Anuka, found in Egypt, Assyria, and in America, was represented, as Layard informs us, on his Hophra-table by the ansated cross †.

Robert Taylor, in his *Diegesis* (chapter xxix.), has compiled the sources to prove—which also Mr. Skelton, in his *Appeal to Common Sense,* page 45, and many other authorities have taken to be fact—that the symbol of the cross was sacred among Indians, Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Arabs, long before the origin of Christianity. Minucius Felix, in his *Octavius,*† written in the beginning of the third century, hints broadly how crucifixion became a Christian symbol. In his apology of the adoration of the crosses, charged on Christians by the heathens, he says to them : " What else are your ensigns, flags, and standards, but crosses gilt and beautified? Your victorious trophies not only represent a simple cross, but a cross with a man upon it. . . . When a pure worshiper adores the true God, with hands extended, he makes the same figure." As soon as it had become customary among the Romans in foreign countries to crucify their enemies, the man on the cross was natural among the victorious trophies, to represent Rome's superiority over her enemies. The church in Rome simply adopted this Roman symbol of victory over her enemies. All this is as

* See the coins of Simon, the Asmonean prince, in De Saulcy ; Dr. M. A. Levy's Juedische Muenzen ; the alphabets in Bagster's Hebrew Lexicon and Grammar ; the alphabets in Webster's Dictionary.

† Reeves' " Apologies of the Fathers," Vol. I., page 139.

likely and demonstrable as the allegation that Jesus was crucified, for which there is no proof outside of the New Testament. The matter was so uncertain, indeed, that the various copies of the gospel of Nicodemus differ widely on this point. In the first manuscript of the Tischendorf collection* (chapter ix.), Pilate says in his verdict to Jesus, "I have declared that thou shalt first be scourged after the custom of the pious kings, and then be fastened upon the cross in the garden where thou wast taken." Here Golgotha is omitted and the crucifixion is supposed to have taken place at Gethsemane. In the same gospel (chap. xvi.), Annas and Caiaphas narrate that they had seen the soldiers put a crown of thorns on the head of Jesus, that he was scourged and then crucified on Calvary. In the second manuscript of the same gospel, the sentence of Pilate is changed thus (chap. ix.): "Therefore I ordain that they first smite thee with a rod, forty stripes, as the laws of the kings ordain; and that they mock thee; and lastly, that they crucify thee." Here the place of crucifixion is omitted entirely, and the Roman scourging is relapsed by the Jewish *Malkoth*. It appears that among other reasons for forging this gospel, there was also this, that Annas and Caiaphas testify that Jesus had been scourged and crucified, because doubts existed that either was the case. At any rate, it is a matter of surprise that the author or authors of those various manuscripts should have differed so widely from the canonical gospels in this particular point, and the trial of Jesus before Pilate, if the matter as narrated in the gospels had been considered historical. It is not a growing myth; it is an entirely different story which the apocryphal gospels narrate. Why should any man have changed facts in a sacred story, unless they had been supposed legendary?

In connection with this wavering uncertainty, it must be considered that the story as it is told on from book to book, always more and more betrays the tendency and object of its first narrator. In Mark, the Jews only claim Barabbas, and all their wickedness consists, first, in not claiming Jesus, and second in crying "Crucify him!" In Matthew, by the last addition, the crime of the Jews becomes still worse by their crying, "His blood be on us,"

* B. Harris Cowper's Apocryphal Gospels.

etc.; so they declare the destruction of Jesus no crime. Still worse the matter grows in Luke. The Jews as a body, together with their entire representatives, Herod included, commit the whole crime; the accusation condemnation, mocking, etc., and Pilate with his soldiers, are entirely exonerated. Worse than this is the story in John, in which the Jews have no pity on Jesus when, scourged and bleeding from many scars, he was exposed to their mercy. In Nicodemus, the Jews also do the scourging, replaced by the *Malkuth;* and in the story of Joseph of Armithea, the Romans have nothing at all to do with the matter; the Jews do the whole. Turn the pyramidal succession of the stories, and you have the simple fact that the crucifixion story, like the symbol of the crucifix itself, came from abroad, and was told with the avowed intention of exonerating the Romans and incriminating the Jews. Mark writing among Jews, shyly narrated it with all its gross contradictions; but as the story was told on, outside of the Jewish circles, it developed its original intent and purpose fully, to the very extent of self-destruction.

II. CAUSE OF THE STORY.

The question might be proposed, Why should Mark have adopted these stories, so hostile to the Jews, if they were not based on fact; and if pure inventions, why should the Christians of Palestine have believed them? It is not difficult to explain this matter. The Jewish rabbi of Nazareth in Galilee, executed as a rebel by a Roman governor, would have been a very poor ornament on the heathen cross, in the estimation of any Greek or Roman. They thought much more of their law and the high dignitaries of Rome, than of a Jewish rebel. Among the Syrians, the Jew and his law, ever since the time of Maccabees, were objects of hatred and prejudice, so that even Tacitus would credit the absurd story coming from Syria, that the Jews worshiped an ass, and kept one in the sanctum sanctorum.* The preference and privileges which the Jews of Egypt enjoyed for so many centuries, and their superiority in wealth and intelligence over the native Egyptian, as Hengstenberg, in the appendix to his works on Egypt states, accounts for

* Tacitus: History, Book V.

the scandals and the wrath of the Egyptians against the Jews. The Romans especially, who hated the valor, patriotism, and religious fidelity of the Jews, could not possibly love them. Besides, the monotheistic Jew, who declared all the creeds and rites of the heathens abominations, their gods gross fictions, and their priests imposters, were naturally hated by the heathens, as they were by the Christians in after-times, on account of denying the Trinity, the gospel story, and the whole fabric of Christian salvation. Errors in religion were always connected with fanaticism, hatred, and relentless persecution. The Romans called the Jews atheists, because they would not believe in the gods, and ridiculed them as a people of idlers, because they kept a Sabbath every seventh day.

This antagonism of the heathens against the Jews, their laws and their religion, was connected with contempt, after the Romans had politically annihilated them. Vanquished nations, whatever their patriotism and heroism may have been, were always objects of contempt to the conquerors, imbeciles, superstitious and thoughtless masses. To all this there came the violent hatred of the Romans against the unyielding and uncompromising Jews, who for two successive centuries bade defiance to Rome's huge power and reckless cunningness. This state of feeling reached its climax in the years between 65 and 130 A. C., just when Christianity assumed the form which is stereotyped in the gospels. This accounts in part for the hostile spirit against the Jews manifested by the evangelists.

Another fact is this. Just at that period of time when misfortune and ruination befell the Jews most severely, in the first post-apostolic generation, the Christians were most active in making proselytes among Gentiles. To have then preached that a crucified Jewish rabbi of Galilee was their savior, would have sounded supremely ridiculous to those heathens. To have added thereto, that the said rabbi was crucified by the command of a Roman governor, because he had been proclaimed king of the Jews, would have been fatal to the whole scheme. In the opinion of the vulgar heathen, where the Roman governor and the Jewish rabbi came in conflict, the former must unquestionably be right, and the latter decidedly wrong. To have preached a savior who was justly con-

demned to die the death of a slave and villain, would certainly have proved fatal to the whole enterprise. Therefore it was neces-ary to exonerate Pilate and the Romans, and to throw the whole burden upon the Jews, in order to establish the innocence and martyrdom of Jesus in the heathen mind.

Last, though certainly not least, it must be taken into consideration that Mark's gospel, which is the main source of the others, was written in the time of Hadrian, when all Jews were considered dangerous and incorrigible rebels, and their religion a capital crime against Rome. To have maintained then that the savior and founder of Christianity was a Jewish patriot, who was proclaimed king of the Jews and was therefore crucified, was no longer mere folly; it was exceedingly dangerous, and would have exposed Christianity to the fiercest wrath of the bloodthirsty emperor. What more of a crime could a body of persons commit, than uphold and worship a rebel, who had been crucified as such? Certainly none, in the estimation of a Roman. Therefore the whole tenor of the gospel had to be changed, and the worst point thereof, the crucifixion, had to be circumvented, as Mark did, to have Pilate appear as the friend of Jesus, who yielded reluctantly to the outside clamor of the Jews, and, against his will and conviction, ordained the crucifixion of Jesus, which, of course, he afterward repented, as the apocryphal gospels narrate. Still Mark, writing in Judea, although a century *post festum*, had to be careful not to justify the Roman more than was actually necessary, to avoid danger. But as the story travels on outside of Judea, all considerations are dropped, and the crime of the Jews increases in proportion with the innocence and justice of Pilate. The object was manifest, the necessity dire, and pious fraud was not considered immoral at that time. Neither those writers, nor the readers then, it appears, saw how they tore the martyr's diadem from the head of Jesus. If he was the mere victim of a furious mob and a weak and vacillating despot, he may have risked that step, knowing in advance that Pilate was in his favor, in order to place himself under Pilate's protection, and was only disappointed in his expectation. He died because there was no escape out of those hands. He did the best in his estimation, which he could do, to

come out of the dilemma in which he had unfortunately been placed. But his last calculation also failed: Pilate yielded to a mad mob, and Jesus was crucified. So the story would appear, if the evangelical account was correct, but so it was not.

III. THE CRUCIFIED KING.

It might appear from the foregoing argument that the crucifixion must anyhow be a historical fact. For, being injurious to primitive Christianity among the heathens, so that the whole story had to be perverted in order to be less offensive, it might have been omitted altogether if it had not been a fact. This, however, is only apparent: it is no real argument. Christ crucified was preached to the heathens by Paul before the existence of a church, and the story was established in Christendom long before it was written. But why should Paul or anybody else have started the crucifixion story if it was not a fact? There is an answer to this query and we will state it.

There existed, in the time of Paul, among the Roman-Syrian heathens, a wide-spread and deep sympathy for one crucified king of the Jews, as is evident from Dio Cassius, Plutarch, Strabo, and Josephus. It was the youngest son of Aristobul, the heroic Maccabee. In the long combat for the crown of Palestine by the brothers Hyrcan and Aristobul, the latter at last succeeded in gaining the sympathy of Julius Cæsar for his cause, who gave him two legions, and sent him to Syria to regain his kingdom; but while under way, men of Pompey's party destroyed him by poison. His body was embalmed in honey, till Antony afterward sent it to Judea to be buried in the royal sepulchre. About the same time Alexander, the son of this Aristobul, who fought at home for his father's cause, was captured by Scipio and beheaded at Antioch. The death of these two valiant princes, whose cause had been declared just by Julius Cæsar, enlisted wide-spread sympathy among Romans. There was one more son left of this heroic family, Antigonus, who followed his mother and sister to Chalcis, where the latter was queen. In the year 43 B. C., however, we find Antigonus again in Palestine claiming the crown. Allied with the Parthians, he maintained himself in his royal position for six years against Herod and Marc Antony. At last, after a heroic

life and reign, he fell in the hands of this Roman. "Antony now gave the kingdom to a certain Herod, and, having stretched Antigonus on a cross and scourged him, a thing never done before to any other king by the Romans, he put him to death."*

The fact that all prominent historians of those days mention this extraordinary occurrence, and the manner how they did it, show that it was considered one of Marc Antony's worst crimes; and that the sympathy with the crucified king was wide-spread and profound. Here we may well have the source of the crucifixion story. That class of heathens, to whom the Gospel was originally preached, knew no difference between David and the Maccabees: both were then extinct dynasties. They had heard of a crucified king of the Jews, who was one of the last scions of a heroic family and a hero himself, young, brave, and generous, whose fate was regretted and whose fame was heralded. Paul, who made use of everything useful, narrated the end of Jesus to correspond with the end of Antigonus, both stories appearing identical, to enlist the prevailing sympathy for the hero of the Gospel story. Therefore he preached "Christ crucified." So the story was established among the Paul-Christians. All the gospels were written by Paul-Christians. John expounds Paul in the Alexandrian method. But, in the time of Hadrian, the story had to be turned in favor of Rome and against the Jews, as we have seen before; and so Mark did. So far, then, there is not the least evidence, outside of Paul and Mark, that Jesus was either scourged or crucified. Let us see, now, how much fact can be elicited from the statements of Mark and his three successors.

IV. THE CRUCIFIXION CONTRADICTED.

It is evident that the crucifixion was not commonly believed among early Christians. It is contradicted three times in the Acts of Apostles, and if we are to believe the author of that book, it was Peter who contradicted it. "Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts, v. 30), says Peter of Jesus. He states again (x. 39), "Whom they slew

* Dio Cassius, Book xlix., p. 465. Plutarch: Life of Antony. John Gill: Notices of the Jews, etc. I. Salvador: The Romans in Palestine. Josephus, Strabo, and others.

and hanged on a tree;" and repeats (xiii. 29), "They took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre." There is no cross and no crucifixion in these statements, which prove, not that Peter said so but that the author of the Acts believed to know traditionally from Peter that Jesus was not crucified. He was slain and then hung to a tree.

Mark also, it appears, was aware of the existing doubts in this point. He informs us that one Simon, a Cyrenian, who met the procession leading Jesus to Calvary, was compelled to bear his cross. John (xix. 17) contradicts this point, stating plainly that Jesus bore the cross. If it had been an accredited fact that Simon bore the cross, John would not have gainsaid it. If no fact, why did Mark state it? He gives us his reason in the same verse, although Matthew and Luke omit it. He says that Simon, the Cyrenian, was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Both these men were companions and friends of Paul,* although the latter afterward turned against the Paul-Christians. Mark wanted a witness who had seen the crucifixion, and by whom the story might have reached Paul. Therefore he impressed this Simon to bear the cross, who must have narrated the affair to his sons, Alexander and Rufus, of whom Paul might have heard it. So he managed to overcome the existing doubts concerning the crucifixion. Matthew and Luke omitted the two sons of Simon, and John omits the father also, because in his locality the crucifixion story was not doubted, or perhaps he considered this testimony insufficient. He had already stated that Jesus had to be crucified, because he had prophesied it, consequently, believing as he did, no testimony was necessary to establish the fact. So Mark points back distinctly to the source of the crucifixion story, viz., to Paul, on whose authority he accepted it, without any other information to rely upon.

It is supposed that the sharp contention which broke out between Paul and Barnabas, his companion, in consequence of which they parted with one another (Acts, xv. 39), had its cause in the difference of opinion concerning the Messiah, whom Paul preached to have been a son of David; and Barnabas maintained: "But because it might hereafter be said that Christ was the son of David, there-

* Romans, xvi. 13; Acts, xix. 33; 1 Tim., i. 20; 2 Tim., iv. 14.

fore David fearing, and well knowing the errors of the wicked, saith, The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand," etc.* But it might be that this was not the sole cause of their contention. There may have been another. Toland in his *Nazarenus* (letter I., chapter fifth) informs us that he had seen an Italian translation of a gospel of Barnabas, which Cramer sold to Prince Eugene, in which Barnabas states "Jesus was not crucified," and he should not die to the very end of the world. This was also the belief of the Basilidians; and in this form the Gospel story became known to Mohammed.† This, we believe, leaves no reasonable doubt that the crucifixion story was not generally believed among early Christians. In reading the canonical Gospel, they must have thought like Origenes (Comm. in Joan, vol. x. § 4), that every passage in Scripture has a spriritual meaning, but that every passage has not a literal meaning; that there is often a spiritual truth under a literal falsehood; or, as he says elsewhere (Homil. 6, in Genesis iii.), that the Scriptures have incorporated into their history many things which never took place. Mosheim says (vol. i., p. 382), "It was a maxim of the Church that it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie, when by that means the interest of the Church might be promoted."

V. ALL GREEK EXCEPT CALVARY.

The crucifixion story, as before us in the Synoptics, was not written in Hebrew, or in the dialect spoken by the Hebrews of Palestine. This is evident from the following particular points. Mark and Matthew call the place of crucifixion Golgotha, to which Mark adds, "Which is, being interpreted, the place of skull." Matthew adds the same interpretation, which John copies without the word Golgotha, and adds, it was a place near Jerusalem. Luke and Nicodemus call the place of crucifixion Calvary, which is the Latin *Calvaria,* viz., the place of bare skulls. Therefore the name does not refer to the form of the hill, but to the bare skulls upon it.

Mark and Matthew must translate the word Golgotha, hence they did not write in the Hebrew dialect, or else

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* Epistle of Barnabas, edit. London, 1820, in the apocryphal New Testament, xi 13.

† See Koran, iii., v. 53; iv., v. 156.

the readers would have been supposed to understand it. It might be suggested, the Greek translators of Mark and Matthew added the definition which, however, is not the case. They pass over many Hebrew names of persons and places without any definition; why should they have made an exception just in this case? Besides, it must be remembered, there is no such word as Golgotha anywhere in Jewish literature, and there is no such place mentioned anywhere near Jerusalem or in Palestine by any writer; and in fact there was no such place, there could have been none near Jerusalem. The Jews buried their dead carefully. Also the executed convict had to be buried before night. No bare skulls, bleaching in the sun, could be found in Palestine, especially not near Jerusalem. It was law, that a bare skull, the bare spinal column, or also the imperfect skeleton of any human being, make man unclean by contact, or also by having it in the house. Man, thus made unclean, could not eat of any sacrificial meal, or of the second tithe, before he had gone through the ceremonies of purification; and whatever he touched was also unclean.* Any impartial reader can see that the object of this law was to prevent the barbarous practice of heathens of having human skulls and skeletons lie about exposed to the decomposing influences of the atmosphere, as the Romans did in Palestine after the fall of Bethar, when for a long time they would give no permission to bury the dead patriots. This law was certainly enforced most rigidly in the vicinity of Jerusalem, of which they maintained "Jerusalem is more holy than all other cities surrounded with walls," so that it was not permitted to keep a dead body over night in the city, or to transport through it human bones. Jerusalem was the place for the sacrificial meals and the consumption of the second tithe, which was considered very holy;† there, and in the surroundings, skulls and skeletons were certainly never seen on the surface of the earth, and consequently there was no place called Golgotha, and there was no such word in the Hebrew dialect. It is a word made by Mark to translate the Latin term *Calvaria*, which, together with the crucifixion story, came from Rome. But after the Syrian word was made nobody understood it, and Mark was obliged to expound it.

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* Maimonides, Hil. Tumath Meth., iii. 1.
† Maimonides, Hil. Beth Habchirah, vii. 14.

This explains the strange fact, that none of the early Christians either mention the spots where Jesus was crucified or buried, or paid the least respect or attention to either, so that none before Eusebius (330 A. C.) refer to them, and then some pointed to the northeast and others to the west of Jerusalem to find Calvary. They did not know it, because there was no such place. So hundred thousands of Christians kneel now spellbound before a holy hole, which they call the holy sepulchre, none knows why, as in former days a Calvary was made, none knows by what authority.

The next point to be considered in this connection is the exclamation of Jesus on the cross. Mark reports that Jesus cried in the Palestine dialect, *Elohi, Elohi, lamah shabaktani?* which is a mistake, for it was intended to be the Aramaic translation of "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It must be *metul mah*, instead of *lamah*, which is Hebrew. Matthew, however, reports Jesus exclaimed, *Eli, Eli, lamah sabachthani?* which is Hebrew, and signifies, "My God, my God, why hast thou sacrificed me?" Still both of them add the same translation—"Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This leads one to believe that Mark did not know the Aramaic, and Matthew was ignorant of the Hebrew.

From the orthodox Christian standpoint it sounds incredible that the Son of God, and himself God, should pray in the words of David, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Therefore Luke, who clings consistently to Paul's Son-of-God dogma, denies this part of the record and maintained Jesus exclaimed, "My Father, into thy hands I recommend my spirit." This was not enough for John, whose Logos was no spirit to be recommended to God, and so he denies the statements of all his predecessors and maintains, Jesus merely said, "It is accomplished." John also denies Luke's statement that Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," which is an imitation of Moses (Numbers, xv. 26). It is characteristic that none had to record an original word of the dying Jesus. It is unlikely that a man in the agony of death should have nothing at all to say, and murmur a few brief Bible passages then and there, most likely known to the children in the street. This

leads to one of the two suppositions, either Jesus was already half dead and unconscious by the scourging before he was crucified, or the evangelists did not know any better. They did not know what Jesus said, and did not understand to say anything important for him. It appears, this was the reason of John in rejecting the statements of his predecessors, and maintaining he said merely, "It is accomplished," and this is original, if nothing else. But this is only one word in Hebrew, or in the Hebrew dialect, *Chalah* or *Chalatah*. Who paid so much attention to the dying man, that he heard that one word spoken upon the cross? If he spoke only that one word and it was heard, how could it possibly escape the memory of the Synoptics? One word and the last word of a dying martyr and teacher, if it had really been uttered and heard, could not have been forgotten or overlooked by his disciples. It must have become a sort of watchword in the nascent church. But (Father, forgive them!) they did not know what the dying Jesus said, and invented for him words or phrases, each to suit his dogmatic standpoint.

Mark and Matthew, translating into Greek the supposed exclamation of Jesus, did certainly not write this part of the story in any but the Greek language. It might again be maintained, the Greek translators added the interpretation of the Bible passage, if Mark's *lamah* for *metul mah* was not in the way, and if it was not for the following important point.

Both Mark and Matthew report, when Jesus cried Eli, Eli, or Elohi, Elohi, those who stood near understood him, "He calleth Elias" the prophet to come and save him. Among Hebrews, this mistake is impossible. For Eli is pronounced *Aili*, the first syllable long, and Elias is pronounced *Eleeyahu*, with the stress on the third syllable *yah*, so that the two words have almost no similarity in sound. In Greek, however, Eli is the first part of Elias, both in letters and sound, so that there can be no doubt whatever the writer of that little incident had the Greek and not the Hebrew in his mind. The incident could not possibly refer to Jews, with whom the mistake is impossible; it must refer to the Roman soldiers about the cross, and must have been written in Greek.

Finally, attention must be called to the fact, that all the Bible passages quoted in the crucifixion story are

taken, not from the Hebrew Bible, but from the Greek Septuagint, as we shall notice below. Here we quote but one passage. Luke (xxiii. 27) reports, that Jesus, on his way to Calvary, made a little speech to the lamenting women who followed him. They were daughters of Jerusalem. Were they wives, daughters, or sisters of those who cried, "Crucify him?" This little speech again is not original. It is partly from Jeremiah (Luke, xxi. 23), and winds up with a passage from Hosea, x. 8, copied literally almost from the Septuagint. Luke has Jesus say, "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us." But in the Hebrew text the order is reversed: "And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall on us."

We do not think it necessary to adduce any more proof in support of the fact, that the crucifixion story was written originally in the Greek. The object of Mark must have been for the Greeks to understand and know, that his sect was not composed of Jews, and his savior was abandoned by them, while the Romans took his part. It was strictly legendary, *i. e.*, to be read in public for certain purposes. This also accounts for the fact, that the Jewish sources have no notice of the crucifixion. The story was Greek and read in the churches only. The Jews of Palestine, in the time of Hadrian, and long after, were fanaticized against the Greek and Latin, and went to no Christian church. Toward the end of the second century, we still find * that Rab went neither to the meetings of the Nazarenes nor of the Ebionites. Samuel went to the meetings of the Ebionites but not of the Nazarenes. The sect which left the mother congregation on the election of Mark as bishop, retained the old name of Ebionites, and the flock of Mark were Nazarenes. Therefore the Jews knew nothing of the crucifixion story.

VI. THE LEGEND.

Readers acquainted with the homiletic literature (*Midrashim* and *Agadoth*) of the ancient Hebrews, at the time of the origin of Christianity, see at once the legendary character, of the Synoptics especially. It was the universal custom of preachers and teachers, either to remodel and shape events to illustrate or to fulfill scriptures, as is

* Talmud Babli, Sabbath, 116 *b*.

done to this very day, or to imagine incidents in all forms of poetry, in order to impress truths or superstitions on uncultivated minds, by concrete symbols, fables or myths, parables or personifications. In numerous cases, posterity took those tropes for facts, and enlarged hugely on them. The whole of the gospels are written in the same method. A passage in the Bible is expounded either by a parable, or by a brief illustration, or by an event shaped to fulfill it, exactly as all the preachers and teachers of those days did. This is the case especially in the crucifixion story, from beginning to end. A number of events, real or imaginary, are so adjusted that they fit and fulfill certain Bible passages. No critical reader imagines that consecutive events transpire exactly so that they fulfill scriptures. This would do away at once with all human freedom. He will certainly be led to think the events are either invented, or so re-adjusted as may suit the case. Legends of this description may be useful for church purposes, or also private devotion and edification; but as historical sources they are spurious.

The legendary character of Mark's crucifixion story is clearly betrayed in the time which he fixes for the particular events. The Hebrews in the second century expected the Redeemer to come on Passover,* the day of Israel's redemption from Egypt. Hence Jesus had to accomplish the redemption task on the first day of Passover. Again, the death of Jesus was looked upon by the primitive Christians as the revelation of the new covenant. Therefore, the event had to take place on a Friday, between the hours of twelve and three; for, according to Hebrew traditions, the revelation on Mount Sinai took place on a Friday†, between the hours of twelve and three.‡ Starting from the idea of a second redemption and a second revelation connected in one event, it was necessary to embellish Calvary somewhat Sinai-like. But the original picture of the thunders and lightnings of Sinai was too grand for a dying demi-god, the poetry too sublime to be easily imitated. The contrast would have been too obvious. There, a lofty mountain in the wilderness, with an entire nation stand-

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* בו נגאלו ובו עתידין להגאל Mechilta, chapter xiv.

† רי פנחס אומר ערב שבת עמדו ישראל בהר סיני—Pirke Rabbi Eliezer, chapter xli.

‡ בשש שעות ביום קבלו ישראל את הדברות ובתשע שעות ביום חזרו לאהליהם—Ibid. chapter xlvi.

ing in awe at the foot thereof; and here, a narrow strip of land outside of the city, with a small mob, a few rude soldiers, and some lamenting women. There, a nation to listen to the voice of the Almighty; and here, barbarous scorn, moans, and the recitation of a few popular passages from the Bible. There, the center figure is the most sublime which imagination can depict—God coming down in a flood of fire upon the dark clouds of Sinai; and here, a dead man on the cross. There, the decalogue is announced; and here, nothing is given to man except probably the one word, "It is done." It would have looked extremely foolish to transfer the Sinai scenes to Calvary; and yet it had to be embellished somewhat Sinai-like. Incapable of producing original poetry, the evangelical authors resorted to the Bible, especially to Zachariah xiv., Psalms xxii. and lxix., and Isaiah liii., and made of it the entire crucifixion scene, with all its details and embellishments. Biblical tropes were changed into facts. This point must be investigated more thoroughly. We begin with Zachariah xiv.

VII. ZACHARIAH XIV.

No unprejudiced reader, whatever his standpoint may be, can believe that the author of Zachariah xiv. thought of Jesus of Nazareth. He speaks of no person at all. It is the combat about Jerusalem, and the victory of God's people, which illumine his visions, and fructify his imagination. In that final victory he prophesies especially three things, which can not be related to Jesus and the crucifixion. He says (verse 8) that then water would spout forth from Jerusalem and flow in two perpetual streams to two seas; and Jerusalem is as dry to-day as it ever was. He says (verse 9) that then God should be king over all the earth, God should be one, and His name one; but there were, and there are now, a host of kings and gods besides the Eternal One, and not even the true pronunciation of the *Tetragrammaton* is known to-day. Then he prophesies (from verse 13, etc.) the glory of Jerusalem, its temple, and the feast of booths to follow that final victory, none of which has transpired after the death of Jesus.

And yet, the evangelists take part of this chapter, which has no relation whatever to Jesus or crucifixion, and embellish with it the Calvary scene, to make it somewhat Si-

nai-like. God who comes, according to Zachariah, to fight for Jerusalem, will stand upon Mount Olivet. Therefore Jesus, during his fight against Pharisees, Zadducees, and priests, had to make his principal home on Mount Olivet. But he could not split that mountain, as Zachariah imagined God would, and move one part north and the other south ; therefore the curtain of the temple had to be torn in twain when Jesus died, although none has ever mentioned the fact. The curtain was there some thirty-five years after the death of Jesus ; had it been torn, somebody must have noticed it. The earthquake mentioned by Zachariah (verse 5), of course was borrowed to embellish Calvary ; it sounded somewhat Sinailike. But it was rather childish to follow Zachariah as far as the resurrection of the saints. Why did the saints resurrect? why not redeemed sinners, when Jesus was crucified? Why did God trouble those saints, whoever they were, to leave their graves, go into the city, and then die again? They must have died again very shortly, for nobody in the world has heard any thing about them. Because Zachariah states (verse 5) God coming to Jerusalem, " And the Lord my God cometh, all the saints with thee," therefore the saints and not the sinners had to resurrect and visit the city on that particular day. But in the fertile imagination of Zachariah, the day of that terrible combat must be dark, very dark, and when the victory is won, toward evening the light breaks forth (verses 7 and 8). Also this darkness was transported over to Calvary, to embellish the scene. If these miracles had been wrought indeed, all Israel and many Gentiles must have known it, and they must have reached Josephus, Philo, or Plinius, and they must have taken notice thereof. Such extraordinary phenomena are not ignored. Besides, the masses who were in favor of Jesus must have been strengthened in their faith ; and yet, there were but 120 Christians found a considerable time after the death of Jesus. So these miracles were not wrought, and the entire outer embellishment of Calvary is taken from Zachariah ; not because it was believed this prophecy referred to Jesus, but simply because the evangelical writers were incompetent to invent original poetry.

VIII. PSALM XXII.

The twenty-second psalm was written probably in the time of the Maccabean struggles. It contains several expressions pointing to that age; and the ancient rabbis already admitted that verse 5, etc., refers to Mordecai and Esther, and that age of persecution.* It is no prophecy, and its author never evinces the least intention of prophesying. It is the prayer of a man and leader in Israel, in time of extreme distress, probably of Jonathan the Asmonean, when on that eventful Friday night he swam the Jordan with his 600 heroic patriots, to escape the Syrian army; and closes in a tone of cheer and encouragement, trusting in God and a good cause. And yet this chapter was taken by the evangelical writers to embellish the crucifixion story.

The beginning is made by Mark in the exclamation of "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" which is the first verse of Psalm xxii. Its author says of himself (verse, 6, etc.): "But I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." This was changed by Mark into the fact, "And they that passed by railed on him [Jesus], wagging their heads, saying," etc. "Likewise also the chief priests, mocking, said among themselves, with the scribes, He saved others: himself he can not save." None can tell how Mark came to know what those scribes said among themselves, as he was no prophet and no son of a prophet. Nor could anybody find a reason why he notices, particularly, the wagging of their heads, if it was not plain, almost self-evident, that he imitated the above passage of the psalm without reference to fact. Matthew and Luke copied this incident with some changes, but John omitted it.

The Psalmist says (verse 15), "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws." This is the cause why Jesus had to be thirsty before he expired, and to say so; although in regard to the drink there is a confusion of accounts in the evangelical reports, on account of another psalm passage, as we shall notice below.

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* Midrash Thilim, chapter xxii.

The three nails are an imitation of verse seventeen of the same psalm, where it says כארי ידי ורגלי "Like a lion [they break] my hand and feet." The same figure of speech occurs in Isaiah, xxxviii. 13. King Hezekiah says of himself, "Like a lion, so broke all my bones." The psalm passage is most likely an imitation thereof. Yet by a mistake of the Septuagint the word *Ka'ari*—"like a lion," is changed into *Ka'aru*—"they pierced my hands and feet." Therefore, and for no other reason, the nails were driven through the hands and feet of Jesus; although there exists no rational ground whatever to believe while others, like the two thieves, were merely tied to the cross, that Jesus, by the particular friendship of Pilate, was nailed to the cross.

Next (verse 18), the Psalmist says, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." Mark changes this into the fact, "And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take." He carefully copies the parallelism of the Psalmist: "parted" and then "cast lots." So do Matthew and Luke. John, however, less acquainted with the rule of Hebrew poetry, sees in the psalm passage two kinds of clothes, "my garments" and "my vesture," and he must have another story to complete the above. He says the four soldiers who crucified Jesus (xix. 23), divided his undergarments in four parts. But there was also a coat without seam, woven in one piece, and they cast lots who should have this peculiar garment. So the Synoptics did not say the thing right, and John had to correct them: "That the scripture might be fulfilled, which sayeth, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they cast lots." So John tells us why the whole incident was invented.

IX. PSALM LXIX.

That the sixty-ninth psalm has no reference to Jesus, is evident from the horrid curses which that author throws at his enemies. He says:

"Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto

their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. But I am poor and sorrowful; let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high."

Curses like these could not be brought in connection with Jesus. They must have been uttered by some captive warrior in Babylonia, who could hope, "For God will save Zion, and will build up the cities of Judah, and they will dwell there and inherit it." This again could have no reference to Jesus. And yet, the twenty-second verse of this psalm was the cause of the various drinks offered to Jesus on the cross.

The drink offered to Jesus, according to Mark, was first wine mixed with myrrh, and then vinegar. The beverage made of wine and myrrh was referred to Jewish custom, to give a certain lotion to the culprit before the execution, to produce stupor.* There are, however, two mistakes in this supposition. In the first place, the Jews, according to Mark, had nothing to do with the crucifixion, and the Romans knew nothing of this custom. In the second place, myrrh is one thing, and olibanum or libanum, called by the Hebrews *libanah*, is another. The myrrh makes the wine bitter, and produces no stupor; but the olibanum, of which the Jewish sources in this case speak, produces stupor. Mark speaks of myrrh and not of olibanum; hence he thought of bitter wine and not of stupor. He thought of the twenty-first verse in the sixty-ninth psalm, "They gave me gall in my meat [refreshment]; and in my thirst they gave vinegar to drink." Therefore, and for no other reason, the bitter wine and the vinegar were introduced. Matthew understood this well, and changed the myrrh into gall, because he thought ראש signifies gall and not myrrh. Luke and John drop both myrrh and gall, because they understood בברותי literally, "in my food," and could not see how one could be fed on gall or myrrh. Still, out of respect for their predecessors, they retained the vinegar, because vinegar and water was a common beverage among the Roman soldiers. There is not the least cause of suspicion, that those various drinks about which there is so much confusion in the evangelical account, are various presentations of the fact. The whole incident was simply made from those psalm pas-

* Maimonides Sanhedrin, xvi. 2.

sages, and introduced as an embellishment of the story. It is not history ; it is legend.

X, ISAIAH LIII.

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is one of the causes that Jesus was crucified, and had so much to suffer, the orthodox trinitarians maintain. If that Isaiah had not prophesied so horrible a fate for the Messiah, Jesus might have escaped all the tribulation and suffering. But being prophesied, it had to be fulfilled, and so Jesus had to suffer. So it was either God's or the prophet's fault; one of the two must have fixed the fate of Jesus centuries before he lived, and those who executed it were mere tools in the hands of an irresistible force. We maintain, on the contrary, the crucifixion story was made to correspond, in part at least, with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, as it was with the chapters reviewed before. We will take two instances in evidence of our assertion.

Luke maintains, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them," etc., which is not mentioned by Mark or Matthew, and is omitted by John. Had Jesus, indeed, made that prayer in his dying hour, having said so very little, it could not possibly have been forgotten, and Mark or Matthew must have known it and noticed it. It is too brief to escape the memory, and too generous to pass unnoticed. Again, had John believed it a fact, he must have brought it into his narrative. Therefore we are certain that the prayer was made by Luke. Why did Luke make it? Simply because Isaiah lxiii. closes with the words ולפשעים יפגיע "And he will make intercession for the transgressors." These words, admitting of a different construction, close the chapter, and with Luke, this prayer closes the life of Jesus; so that no doubt can be left of Luke's intention to describe the end of Jesus exactly as the chapter ends. Thus we know the intentions of this evangelist.

Again, all the evangelists notice repeatedly, and with particular care, the consistent silence of Jesus in his trial before the Jews and Pilate, and also before Herod, according to Luke. We have noticed above, that if those trials had actually taken place, the disciples had no means whatever to know what was said or not said there. Hence the silence of Jesus is no historical fact, nor was it put for moral effect. It was put in because it is stated twice

in Isaiah, liii. 7 : " And he will not open his mouth." The story had to tally with the prophecy.

The intention of the evangelists is expressed by Mark in regard to the two thieves. Two thieves, Mark narrates, were crucified with Jesus, " the one on his right hand, and the other on his left ;" which with some change is repeated by the other evangelists. Mark tells us, this had to be done in order to fulfill the Scriptures, " And he was numbered with the transgressors." Isaiah uses here the term נִמְנָה "he was numbered," in the past tense, and speaks of one who was numbered with transgressors, and not of one who should hereafter be so numbered ; hence he could not have thought of Jesus. But the evangelists were no grammarians, and did not care about such niceties. Still the occurrence looks suspicious. It appears those two poor fellows had to die on the cross then and there, by an inevitable decree of Providence ; because God was bound to make good His word spoken by Isaiah. They were bound to be thieves, in order to be crucified then and there. This is fatalism in its worst form.

Our suspicion grows, if we turn over to Luke. Mark and Matthew tell us, the two thieves also mocked Jesus. They had an eye upon Psalm xxii. 7 : " All they that see me laugh me to scorn." Luke, however, has another version of the affair. He says only one of the thieves insulted Jesus, but the other was a pious thief, who rebuked his comrade like a moralizing preacher. He made a handsome gallow speech, confessed his guilt, and acknowledged the innocence of Jesus. How did he know it ? Did he in his prison communicate with the Holy Ghost ? The pious thief upon the cross rises in his emphasis to the climax in his prayer, " Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." This is certainly strange and marvelous. The thief knew more and believed more than the disciples, who for a long time after waited for the return of Jesus to establish his kingdom in Palestine, and not somewhere in heaven. If there is any doubt that this thief, his speech and prayer, are fictitious, the answer of Jesus, according to Luke, dispels it. Jesus, says Luke, replied, " To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." These words are from 1 Samuel, xxviii. 19—

" Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines : and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me : the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines"—

With the exception of the Greek paradise. Here we have no longer the simple Son of man, the martyr in his last agony; here we have the Jesus of the second century, who takes out the souls from hell, as Nicodemus narrates, forgives sins, and does such other commission business for the Almighty. But as though that was not enough to establish the authorship of Luke, there comes yet the word "paradise." The Jews called the future happiness "life eternal," or *Chelek l'olam habba*. The word paradise occurs in the Talmud only, and also there it bears an entirely different signification. Also in the New Testament, it only occurs in 2 Corinthians, xii. 4, and Romans, ii. 7—Paul speaking to Greeks. In Jerusalem, at that time, none used the word paradise. This is certainly an anachronism, and establishes, beyond a doubt, that the pious thief, with all about him, is Luke's ingenious invention, which John did not believe and would not adopt. Luke needed the incident to fulfill Scriptures. The closing passage of Isaiah liii. has three members, the middle of which was not fulfilled: "And he bare the sin of many," which, according to the Septuagint, must be rendered, "And he bare great sin." So Jesus had to take away the great sin of the thief and secure to him the paradise—all that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah be applied literally to Jesus.

Had Luke believed the story of the two thieves, he could not have the audacity to add his fictitious incident. But knowing that the thieves were there in the crucifixion story, because Isaiah was understood to suggest it, he could add another story on the same ground.

It is strange that none of the critics ever discussed the question, Why were these thieves crucified? They were thieves (*Listis*), and no robbers or democratic guerrilleroes, as Barabbas was; so the evangelists state. Well, then, why were they crucified? The Jewish law (Exodus, xxi. 37; xxii. 1-3) punishes no thief with death. It could not have been a later law among the Jews to punish thieves so severely; for it was a settled principle in Hebrew legislation that capital punishment could be inflicted only where the Bible dictates it,* and history offers no precedence to the contrary. The Roman law concerning theft and robbery, borrowed from the Athenians, was in

* על רברי הורה חייבים מיתה ואין חייבים מיתה עלרברי סופרים—Siphri, Shophtim, 154.

spirit the same as the Jewish law. Therefore none can tell why thieves were crucified.

We know only of one intimation in Herodotus (Euterpe 121) that certain thieves in Egypt suffered the penalty of death. Mark, who came from Egypt, may have mistaken this for a Roman law, and thought two thieves might have been crucified also in Jerusalem. To the best of our knowledge, no such case is recorded anywhere; and there is not the slightest ground to believe that the two persons were crucified with Jesus. It was necessary for Mark to make out a case similar to that of Isaiah's servant of the Lord, and he ornamented his imaginary Golgotha with two more crosses.

XI. THE SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT.

We know now that the crucifixion story, *post festum*, was so shaped and represented that superficial and ungrammatical readers of the Bible might have been led to believe it had been done so and not otherwise, because it was prophesied; and Jesus being the suffering person as prophesied, must have been the Messiah. It must always be borne in mind that the gospels were not written for Jews; for when the first was written, the separation of Jew and Christian, whatever name this or that sect bore, was an accomplished fact, and fanaticism kept them far apart. The evangelists wrote chiefly for Gentiles, whose knowledge of the Bible was limited and derived from translations not always correct.

The causes which prompted the disciples, and after them the evangelists, to accommodate the gospel story to biblical events and tropes are easily discovered. In the first place, it was the primary intention of the apostles to preach Judaism, which became, with Paul, denationalized Judaism, which had its numerous admirers among the Gentiles in Rome, and throughout the empire. The Bible had become known to the Gentiles as a holy book long before the apostles. Therefore, Paul argues chiefly from the Jewish Bible, always presupposing it as well known to his readers or hearers as a holy book. In order to have effect with those devout Gentiles, the Jesus story had necessarily to be propped upon the Jewish Bible. Take away this underlying authority, and, for all religious purposes, the whole story shrinks to a common and

poetically adorned biographical sketch, overloaded with ghost stories and incredible miracles.

In the second place, the death of Jesus was certainly a source of scorn and derision to his surviving admirers. The conquered, captured, and executed Messiah was too impotent a figure to the oriental imagination, and the Jewish ideal of a redeemer, not to excite derision and scorn. The disciples who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, indeed, and that he had laid down his life for theirs, could not imagine that this was not a particular arrangement of Providence for the common good; and being such, pious Jews as they were, they believed it must be foreshadowed in the Bible. Illiterate, as they were, and in frequent communication with Grecian and Syrian heathens in Palestine, the idea of the sacrificed Prometheus, Thamuz or Crishna, was easily identified with the person and fate of Jesus; and by a novel method of expounding Scriptures the suffering Messiah was discovered in, or rather unconsciously imposed upon, the Bible. So the disciples overcame, among themselves at least, the vexation growing out of the sufferings and death of Jesus. The door once opened to an exegese independent of grammar and the kindred sciences, it was extremely easy to find types and tropes in Scriptures applicable to Jesus. The Psalms and Prophets are full of plaintive effusions which might be applied to any unfortunate man as well as to Jesus. The whole history of Israel is one long tragedy in the world's drama. Every unsuccessful philanthropist and every martyr has his prototype in Hebrew Scriptures. This system, initiated by the disciples and continued by Paul, became the standing exegese of the Church. So, gradually, events from the life of Jesus were expounded to fulfill Scriptures, and scriptural tropes were changed into events and added to the life of Jesus. So, colored and enlarged, the story reached the evangelists in the second century, who wrote it, each from his own standpoint and in the sense of his respective church.

These same scriptural passages, if analyzed by the light of criticism, as was done by Ibn Ezra, Kimchi, Gesenius, Ewald, Hitzig, and other eminent scholars, bear not the least relation to Jesus and his fate; and those critics did undoubtedly understand the Bible better than the fishermen of Galilee did, who had not the remotest idea of grammar, philology, history, or archæology. The fifty-

third chapter of Isaiah, for instance, which was written about 525 B. C., and is an address of consolation to the then suffering people of Israel under Cambyses, or pseudo Smerdis, has not the least relation to Jesus and his fate. It merely announces what kings in after-times will say of downtrodden Israel, when at last truth, justice, and freedom will triumph by Israel's consistency and adherence to God's truth, under painful sufferings. But aside of all this, Israel, the nation of the Book, who suffered thousand-fold martyrdom for the Bible, of whose mind it was produced, and to whose reason it was addressed, ought to understand that book. This might be safely admitted. But Israel unanimously declares, there is no reference in the Bible to Jesus or his fate. There is no trace in Scriptures of any suffering Messiah.

We believe to have succeeded in showing, anyhow, that all those scriptural passages admit of another construction. Hence two things must be proved, viz., that the evangelical construction is correct, and that the events actually transpired, exactly as the evangelists maintain they did; neither of which has ever been done, and in our estimation it can not be done. Therefore the scriptural argument has not the least weight with the critical reader, who can see in the crucifixion story no more than a piece of sacred poetry in prose, composed with the avowed intention of imitating biblical tropes and changing them into alleged facts.

XII. THE TRUE STORY.

In the face of the arguments produced, the crucifixion story can not be upheld as a historical fact. There exists, certainly, no rational ground whatever for the belief that the affair took place in the manner as the evangelists described it. All that can be saved of the whole story is, that after Jesus had answered the first question before Pilate, viz., "Art thou the king of the Jews?" which it is natural to suppose he was asked, and also this can be supposition only, he was given over to the Roman soldiers to be disposed of as fast as possible, before his admirers and followers could come to his rescue, or any demonstration in his favor could have been made. He was captured in the night as quietly as possible, was guarded in some place, probably in the high-priest's court, completely secluded from the eyes of the populace, and early

in the morning he was brought before Pilate as cautiously and as quietly as it could be done, and on his command, disposed of by the soldiers as fast as practicable, and in a manner not known to the people. All this was done most likely while the multitude worshiped on Mount Moriah, and nobody had an omen of the tragical end of the man of Nazareth. There may have and there may not have been before the gubernatorial palace a crowd to demand the release of Barabbas, since neither that name nor that custom is known in Jewish history; but they had certainly nothing to do with Jesus or his fate. It is possible enough that in the afternoon the dead body of Jesus, on a tree or a cross, or otherwise, was exposed to the gaze of the multitude, to mortify the Jews who were ready to accept him as the Messiah; to deride the others by the label, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews;" and to make sure against every possible outbreak and demonstration in his behalf; but we have no documents before us to establish this as an unquestionable fact. The disciples who fled so confusedly when Jesus was arrested, were certainly not present when he was tried, condemned, and executed. There could have been very few persons present at those scenes, as secrecy was dictated by prudence. Therefore, right at the start the stories of his end may have been variously reported and told retrospectively by different parties as they thought the events might have occurred. Some said he was crucified; others thought he was hung to a tree; and others again said he did not die at all. Gradually, the voice of Paul established the crucifixion, and the Bible passages were applied to dress up a new story, as wanted for the Gentile and especially the Roman ear.

XIII. VICARIOUS ATONEMENT.

But be all this as it may, Jesus had carried out his resolution. He had laid down his life for the lives of his disciples and all the other people who might have been massacred in the contemplated demonstration in his favor. He was a martyr, although not in the sense as Christian dogmatics construe it; yet he was a martyr who elicits admiration. Unable to carry out the original plan—the restoration of the kingdom of heaven in Israel—and seeing his followers and admirers rushing heedlessly into a mad scheme of rebellion, he laid down his life heroically

for his friends and countrymen. His immediate disciples and followers never speak of Jesus' martyrdom otherwise than "He who hath laid down his life for us;" or "He who died for us;" or "He who suffered for us." They never extend the signification of his suffering and death beyond the immediate circle of his disciples, for whose life he had laid down his own. Peter, according to the genuinely orthodox doctrine of the Pharisees, admonished his brethren to repentance of sin, because the righteous man was so suddenly snatched away from their midst, and in order to hasten the approach of the kingdom of heaven which, he surely expected, Jesus would establish yet, and to this end return from the realm of death. But he had not the remotest idea of vicarious atonement.

Paul preached denationalized Judaism, and turned historical events into religious topics. So David, Solomon, and other kings of Judah became saints, and the king of the Jews the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus, the proclaimed Messiah, was turned into a son of David for Jews, and a son of God for Gentiles. The political fabric of the Hebrew people, called in the theocratic style the kingdom of heaven, was changed into a theological fiction under the rule of the dead Jesus. The spiritual resurrection of Jesus, which the original apostles taught, was transformed into a bodily resurrection for the benefit of heathens with gross conceptions of spirit and God. The last supper of Jesus became a sacrament. So also the martyrdom of Jesus was turned to general use. He had died for all who did or will believe in him, Paul maintained; his death is an atonement for the sins of all, also the unconverted relatives of those who believed in him. It was a theological exposition of the event on the part of Paul, of which nobody else had any knowledge. Christendom has accepted the dogma on the wisdom and integrity of Paul. Jesus and his immediate disciples had no knowledge of vicarious atonement. All that can be discovered in the sources is that Jesus has laid down his life for the lives of his immediate disciples, friends, and countrymen, without any reference to other people, to any future life or happiness, to any new doctrine or dogma. By the influence of Paul, the vicarious atonement was imposed upon the Gospel. It was a considerable step in advance on the heathen conceptions and institutions of atonement, much more rational and humane than theirs; but it was

a mere substitute, far behind the rational doctrine of the prophet (Isaiah, lv. 6, 7):

> Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.
> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Paul was a wise man, no doubt. He dealt with Pagans according to their mental or moral abilities. He took away, he gave, he reformed and remodeled existing elements to the best of his ability, in order to impress them with the religious idea. To him, the Son of God was no more than the incarnate symbol of the religious idea. Since the Pagans could not reach the Father (monotheism) in his absolute spirituality, he led them to the Father through the Son, viz., the incarnate and accommodated religious idea. Therefore, it gave him no particular trouble to change and amend stories and incidents, as he could best use them for his higher aims. Still, he made one great mistake. He thought all would be redeemed by the Son, or the religious idea; and when all was accomplished the Son would return the government to the Father, and God be again all in all. In our modern and sober phraseology this signifies, the religious idea should redeem the human family from all prevailing sinfulness and misery, and restore the dominion of truth and righteousness. But we, who have eighteen centuries of history behind us, know that this is a mistake. The human family has not been redeemed by the Son. The religious idea is one factor in the world's history, and the Daughter, Sophia, Wisdom, the progress of learning, science, philosophy, invention, and culture, is another and very powerful factor of history, a redeeming agency, against which Paul and his compatriots declared war. This was his mistake. Therefore the Christian story, with the dogmatism based upon it, held out so long. All dominion was given to the Son and none to the Daughter. So the Son was degraded to superstition and fanaticism, and Minerva occupies a hostile position toward Adonis. The next reformatory step must be to overcome that hostility by, doing away with gods and goddesses, symbols and dogmas, incarnation and accommodation, to exhibit clearly and logically the unity of the religious and philosophical ideas as one truth, which is the redeemer of man. Many stories, legends, myths,

fables, and miracles must be left behind. Like the Christian story, they can not be saved; they belonged to former and more childlike generations. Many doctrines, dogmas, superstitions, and prejudices will have to be overcome. Like Christology, they have gone under in the current of growing philosophy. But the resurrected or liberated religious idea, in unison and harmony with philosophy and truth, will redeem the human family. This is probably the most exalted faith and the most religious standpoint of intelligent men. The vicarious atonement of Paul symbolizes that sins are overcome and expiated by the power of the religious idea. This is but partially true; for without the control of human wisdom, the religious idea leads to new follies, as far, indeed, as under the wheels of the car of Juggernaut, or the flaming pyres of the Inquisition. The vicarious atonement of Paul is a standpoint overcome by the experience of history.

XIV. THE JEWS DID NOT CRUCIFY JESUS.

One of the falsehoods to be erased from the memory of Christendom, for the sake of truth and humanity, is the horrid and shocking mad-dog cry—the Jews crucified Jesus. What hell could invent of fiendish torments and diabolic scorns was employed in Christendom, to make the Jew miserable with Christian love. Every fanatic, imbecile, or robber assumed the right to trample and spit upon the Jew. Every crazy priest has a doctrine on hand to justify those barbarous outrages as the special work of Providence. Every smooth-faced hypocrite or sorrowful bigot in our days has something harsh in his heart against the Jew who killed Christ; as though these few persons described in the New Testament had been the Hebrew people, or it was anybody's fault now that a man was killed eighteen centuries ago. So tenacious, however, and unreasoning is fanaticism, that it must be burnt out of the soul to be overcome. As long as that source of hatred exists in Christendom, Christianity is no religion: it is a misfortune for weeping humanity.

Aside of all our arguments, the Academy of France was fully entitled to do as was done, viz., to declare that the Jews did not crucify Jesus; for the evangelists say plainly, the Roman soldiers crucified him. If for argument's sake we admit Jesus was crucified, which none can

establish satisfactorily, we can only maintain it on the authority of Mark, and Mark narrates the Romans and not the Jews crucified Jesus. We open the gospel of Mark and read from the fifteenth chapter this:

"And the soldiers led him away into the hall called Pretorium; and they called together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshiped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them what every man should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him."

No sane reader finds in these words a Jew. The Roman soldiers on command of Pilate accomplish the whole feat. Matthew (xxvii. 27) tells the same story precisely, also exonerating the Jews entirely. It appears, from a close inspection of Luke, that he also did mean to say as his predecessors, the Romans and not the Jews crucified Jesus. He narrates (xxiii. 27), "And as they led him away," etc., which leaves it undecided who led him away, Jews or Romans. But he goes on in the narrative and always uses the infinite "they," for the same band of persons who crucified Jesus and the two thieves, and divided among themselves the clothes of Jesus. These were evidently no Jews; for, if they from sheer fanaticism had degraded themselves to the bloody executioners of Rome, in crucifying Jesus, they certainly would not have crucified the two thieves, who, if really executed, were murdered in defiance of law, and against the popular will. Besides, the same persons who crucified Jesus also divided his garments among themselves; and turning over to John (xix. 23), we are told plainly, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat," etc., informing us plainly not only that those who divided the garments among themselves, but also those who crucified Jesus, were four Roman soldiers. He also informs us that the priests protested against the super-

scription, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews;" but Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written" (John, xix. 22). If Jews had crucified Jesus, this superscription, which was intended to their chagrin, would certainly not have been fastened to the cross. Therefore the direct statements of the gospels are, the Romans crucified Jesus. The pack of howling fanatics who still cry at the heels of the Jew, "Christ Killer," have yet to learn to read and understand the gospels correctly. Cunning wickedness and furious fanaticism, for centuries of ghostly darkness, raised the bloody cry, the Jews crucified Jesus; blind ignorance and servile obedience re-echoed the unreasoning howl at carnivals of madness, to oppress, exile, persecute, plunder and slaughter. Shame, burning shame, on priests and mobs of the past who used this barbarous war-cry in defiance of humanity; thousandfold shame on modern priests and preachers who still unblushingly proclaim this infamous lie, not only in defiance of the Gospel, but also of truth, humanity, and religion. They ought to be driven from the pulpits of every civilized community, and sent to savages whose conceptions of religion are as narrow as their own.

THE CONCLUSION.

The martyrdom of Jesus of Nazareth has been gratefully acknowledged by his disciples whose lives he saved by the sacrifice of his own, and by their friends who would have fallen by the score had he not prevented the rebellion ripe at Jerusalem. Posterity infatuated with Pagan apotheosis made of that simple martyrdom a big bubble colored with the myths of resurrection and ascension to that very heaven which the telescope has got out of man's way. The simple fact has been made the foundation of a novel myth to suit the gross conceptions of ex-heathens. Modern theology understanding well enough that the myth can not be saved, seeks refuge in the greatness and self-denial of the man who died for an idea, as though Jesus had been the only man who died for an idea. Thousands, tens of thousands of Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, and Heathens, have died for ideas, and some of them were very foolish. But Jesus did not die for an idea. He never advanced anything new to die for. He was not accused of saying or teaching anything origi-

nal. Nobody has ever been able to discover anything new and original in the gospels. He died to save the lives of his friends, and this is much more meritorious in our estimation than if he had died for a questionable idea. But then the whole fabric of vicarious atonement is demolished, which reason does anyhow, and modern theology can not get over the absurdity that the Almighty Lord of the universe, the infinite and eternal Cause of all causes, had to kill some innocent fellow in order to be reconciled to the human beings. However abstractly they speculate and subtilize, there is always an undigested bone of man-god, god-man, and vicarious atonement in the theological stomach. Therefore theology appears so ridiculous in the eyes of modern philosophy. The theological speculation can not go far enough to hold pace with modern astronomy. However nicely the idea may be dressed, the great God of the immense universe looks too small upon the cross of Calvary; and the human family is too large, has too numerous virtues and vices, to be perfectly represented by, and dependent on, one rabbi of Galilee. Speculate as they may, one way or another, they must connect the Eternal and the fate of the human family with the person and fate of Jesus. That is the very thing which deprives Jesus of his crown of martyrdom, and brings religion in perpetual conflict with philosophy. It is not the religious idea which was crucified in Jesus and resurrected with him as with all its martyrs; although his belief in immortality may have strengthened him in the agony of death. It was the idea of duty to his disciples and friends which led him to the realms of death. This deserves admiration, but no more. It demonstrates the nobility of human nature, but proves nothing in regard to providence, or the providential scheme of government.

The Christian story, as the gospels narrate it, is a big bubble. You approach it critically and it bursts. Dogmatic Christology built upon it is a paper balloon kept afloat by gas. All so-called lives of Christ, or biographies of Jesus, are works of fiction, erected by imagination on the shifting foundation of meager and unreliable records. There are very few passages in the gospels which can stand the rigid application of honest criticism. Therefore, Schleiermacher's "Religion of Christ," or rather the religion based upon the life of Jesus, is no less

the work of phantasy than the orthodox dogmatism. Philosophy and science have overcome the latter, and criticism has made impossible the former. In modern science and philosophy, orthodox Christology is out of question. Nobody attempts any longer to save a mere shade thereof. The ghost has returned to Hades. In modern criticism, as this our last and probably also least contribution shows, the Gospel sources became so utterly worthless and unreliable that it takes more than ordinary faith to believe that any portion thereof is at all true. The eucharist was not established by Jesus, and can not be called a sacrament. The trials of Jesus are positively not true: they are pure inventions. The crucifixion story as narrated is certainly not true, and it is extremely difficult to save the bare fact that Jesus was crucified. What can the critic do with books in which a few facts must be ingeniously guessed from under the mountain of ghost-stories, childish miracles, and dogmatic tendencies? It is absurd to expect of him to regard them as sources of religious instruction, in preference of any other mythologies and legends. All the religious precepts expressed in the gospels, and a good many more, are derived from the Old Testament, and systematically compiled in the author's "Judaism: its Doctrines and Duties," without any Satan, ghost-stories, miracles, and improbabilities. Hence, we have a perfect right to expect of all readers the acknowledgment that our book is superior to the gospels; nevertheless we do not expect to be considered a superior mortal. We challenge all orthodoxy to produce from the gospels any sound, humane, and universal doctrine not contained in our "Judaism," etc.; still we know that we are no special son of God. What good will books with Satan, ghost-stories, miracles, and improbabilities do us, from the religious standpoint, if an ordinary mortal like this author can write a better book on religion without that incumbrance on reason? That is the point where modern critics arrived, therefore the gospels have become books for the museum and the archæologist, for students of mythology and ancient literature. The spirit of dogmatic Christology hovers still over a portion of civilized society, in antic organizations, disciplines, and hereditary forms of faith and worship; in science and philosophy, and in the realm of criticism, its day is past. The univer-

sal, religious, and ethical element of Christianity has no connection whatever with Jesus or his apostles, with the Gospel or the Gospel story; it exists independent of any person or story. Therefore it needs neither the Gospel story nor its heroes. In the common acceptation of the terms, one can be a good Christian without the slightest belief in Jesus or the gospels. It is useless for us, who are men and thinkers, to deceive ourselves and others—nay, it is immoral to do it. In this third quarter of the nineteenth century the intelligence believes no longer in Jesus or the gospels, although faint shadows thereof still hover on the imagination of unclear and undecided thinkers. As it was at the end of Roman Paganism, so it is now; the masses are deceived and fooled, or do it for themselves, and persons of vivacious phantasies prefer the masquerade of delusion to the simple sublimity of majestic but naked truth. Therefore fanaticism is in the minority and without energy, so that the Church is subjected to the State, in Berlin and in Rome. The decline of the Church as a political power proves beyond a doubt the decline of Christian faith. The conflicts of Church and State all over the European continent, and the hostility between intelligence and dogmatic Christianity, demonstrate the death of Christology in the consciousness of modern culture. It is useless to shut our eyes to these facts. Like rabbinical Judaism, dogmatic Christianity was the product of ages without typography, telescopes, microscopes, telegraphs, and the power of steam. These right arms of intelligence have fought the titanic battles, conquered and demolished the ancient castles, and remove now the debris, preparing the ground upon which there shall be reared the gorgeous temple of humanity, one universal republic, one universal religion of intelligence, and one great universal brotherhood. This is the new covenant, the gospel of humanity and reason.

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